NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

HISTORY

KUBLAI KHAN
OVERLORD OF CHINA

PIRATES OF ANTIQUITY
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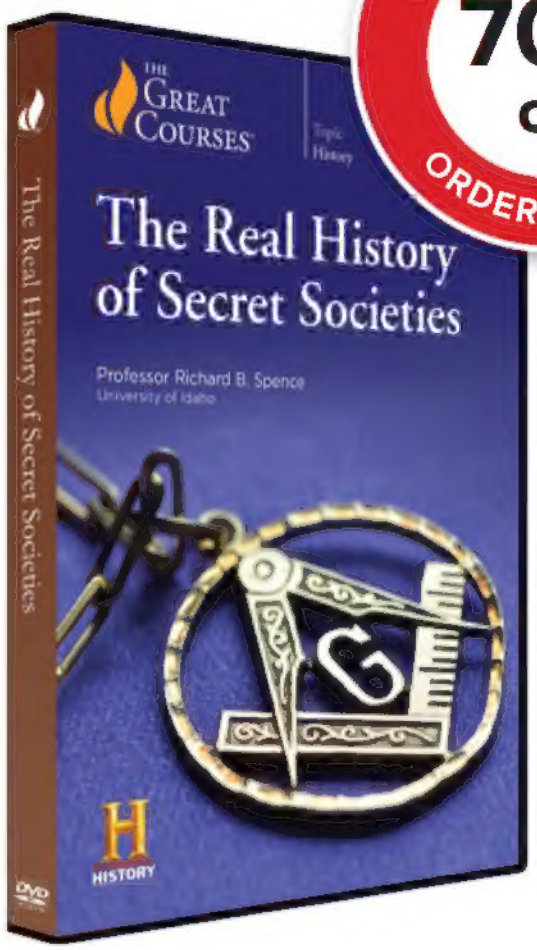

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Xanadu: The name captures the imagination. Its most famous appearance is in a 1797 poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge that opens with the words "In Xanadu did Kubla Khan / A stately pleasure-dome decree."

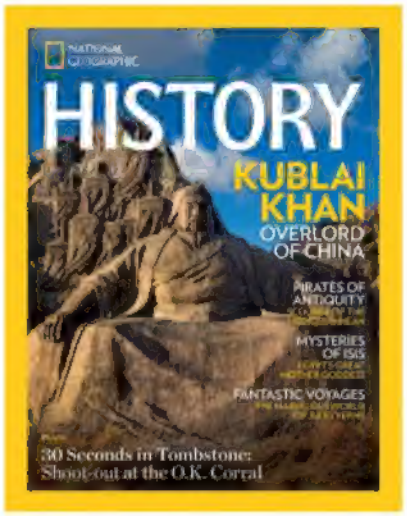
Coleridge drew his inspiration from the writings of Venetian explorer Marco Polo, who sensationalized Kublai Khan and his summer estate, called Shangdu in his 13th-century account. Polo's account spares nothing in describing the lush gardens with thousands of trees, massive chambers gilded with silver and gold, and a diverse menagerie of animals including leopards, hawks, and 10,000 snow-white horses.

Kublai Khan and his summer palace are now shorthand for fabulous wealth, luxury, and fantasy (in 1941's *Citizen Kane*, could Charles Foster Kane's estate be named anything other than Xanadu?)—but celebrating the splendor often leaves out much of the history.

Through his strength as a warrior and his wisdom as a statesman, Kublai Khan commanded the largest contiguous land empire the world has ever known. He united China and stretched the Mongol Empire from Persia to the Pacific. The rich story of Kublai Khan is so much more than Xanadu.

Amy Briggs

Amy Briggs, Executive Editor



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HISTORY

VOL. 6 NO. 1

HITTITE HUNTERS
Charioteers chase a lion in a hunt scene on a neo-Hittite relief made around 750 B.C. Pergamon Museum, Berlin.

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The mother goddess Isis originated in Egypt's distant past. Her worship spread beyond the Nile and throughout the Mediterranean as she charmed the Greek and Roman worlds, her cult reaching as far north as Britain.

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The grandson of the fearsome Genghis Khan united China under Mongol rule, and reigned over the largest contiguous empire in history.

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90 DISCOVERIES
In the 1800s a forgotten cluster of ancient Armenian stone churches fascinated travelers. This site was Ani, once the rich capital of a thriving medieval trade network.

THE RESEARCH VESSEL *PETREL* has located more than 30 historically significant shipwrecks in the Pacific, including the aircraft carrier U.S.S. *Wasp*, sunk by a Japanese submarine in September 1942. *Petrel*'s two deep-sea vehicles can survey craft at depths of three miles. One of these is equipped with long-range sonar equipment that can detect anomalies on the seabed.

VULCAN INC.

AMERICAN DESIGNER NORMAN BEL GEDDES CREATED REALISTIC DIORAMAS DEPICTING WORLD WAR II EVENTS, INCLUDING THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY AND THE DAMAGE TO THE JAPANESE VESSELS *SORYU*, *KAGA*, AND *AKAGI*.

PJF MILITARY COLLECTION/ALAMY

NG MAPS

LYING ROUGHLY halfway between Tokyo and San Francisco, the Midway Atoll was claimed for the United States in 1859, and placed under the control of the U.S. Navy in 1903. Its two islands, together totaling less than three square miles, were vital staging areas in early transpacific aviation.

WRECKS OF WORLD WAR II

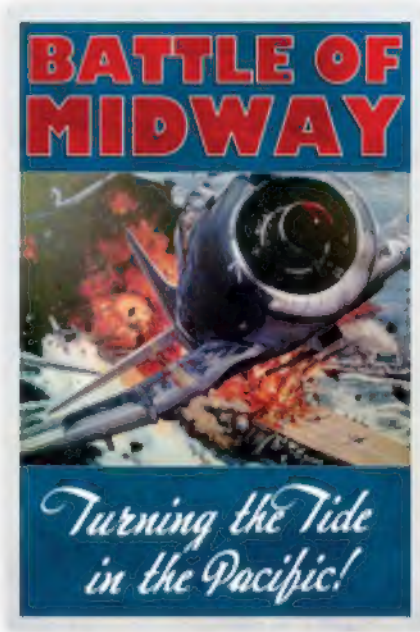
Deep Discoveries From the Battle of Midway

Two of the four Japanese carriers sunk in the decisive World War II battle have been found.

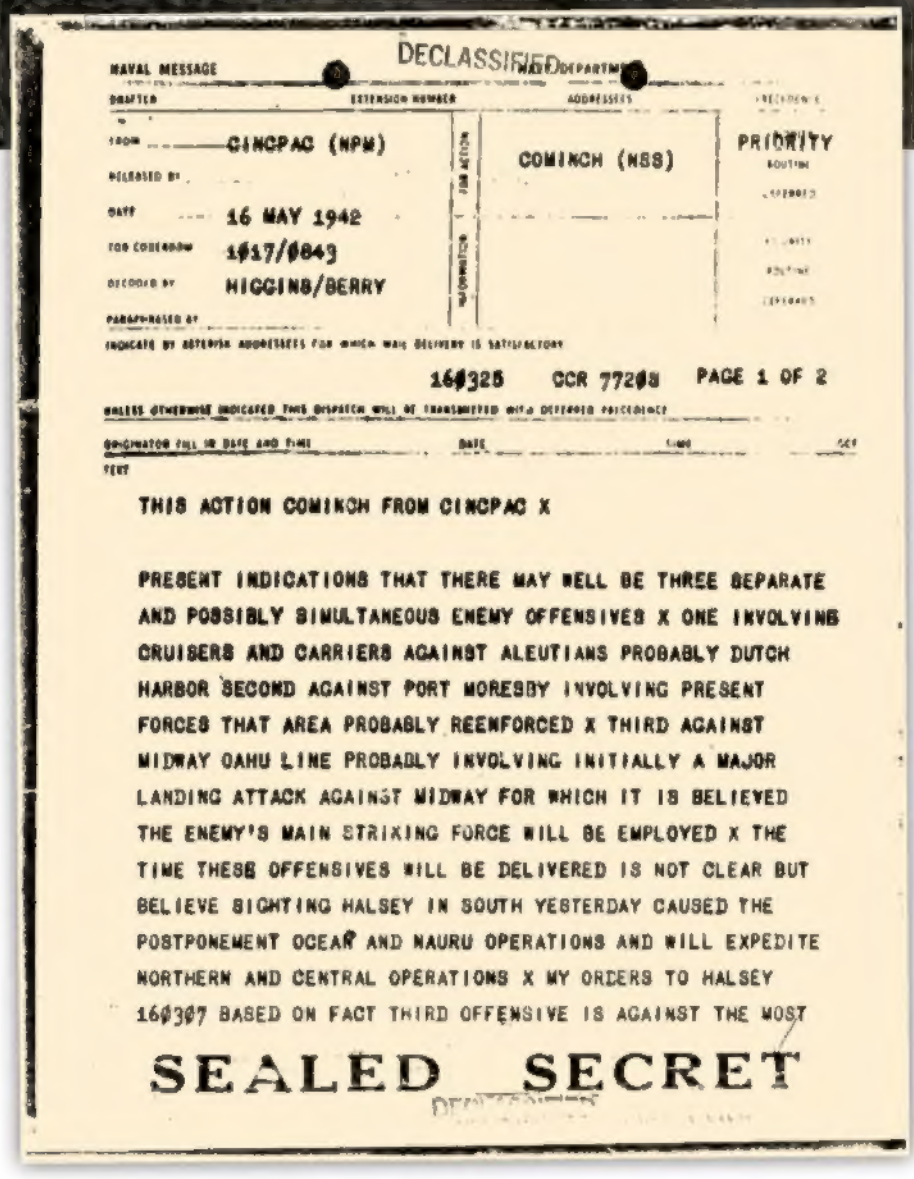
State-of-the-art technology has probed thousands of feet below the Pacific to glimpse the wreckage of one of the most pivotal battles of the Second World War.

A crew aboard the research vessel *Petrel*, operated by Seattle-based Vulcan Inc., has located and imaged two of the four Japanese aircraft carriers sunk during the Battle of Midway in June 1942. The three-day clash ended with a humiliating defeat for Japan, turning the tide of the war in the Pacific theater.

Deploying deep-sea diving vehicles, the research team mapped the seabed around the isolated Midway Atoll.



CHESTER W. NIMITZ, COMMANDER OF THE U.S. PACIFIC FLEET, WARNED WASHINGTON, D.C., IN A MAY 1942 COMMUNICATION (BELOW), OF AN IMMINENT JAPANESE ATTACK.
U.S. NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



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THIS ACTION COMINCH FROM CINCPAC X

PRESENT INDICATIONS THAT THERE MAY WELL BE THREE SEPARATE AND POSSIBLY SIMULTANEOUS ENEMY OFFENSIVES X ONE INVOLVING CRUISERS AND CARRIERS AGAINST ALEUTIANS PROBABLY DUTCH HARBOR SECOND AGAINST PORT MORESBY INVOLVING PRESENT FORCES THAT AREA PROBABLY REENFORCED X THIRD AGAINST MIDWAY OAHU LINE PROBABLY INVOLVING INITIALLY A MAJOR LANDING ATTACK AGAINST MIDWAY FOR WHICH IT IS BELIEVED THE ENEMY'S MAIN STRIKING FORCE WILL BE EMPLOYED X THE TIME THESE OFFENSIVES WILL BE DELIVERED IS NOT CLEAR BUT BELIEVE SIGHTING HALSEY IN SOUTH YESTERDAY CAUSED THE POSTPONEMENT OCEAN AND NAURU OPERATIONS AND WILL EXPEDITE NORTHERN AND CENTRAL OPERATIONS X MY ORDERS TO HALSEY 160307 BASED ON FACT THIRD OFFENSIVE IS AGAINST THE MOST

SEALED SECRET

DEPARTMENT

Following a debris field, the vehicles came upon a wreck deeply embedded in the seafloor. This vessel was identified as the wreck of the Japanese carrier *Kaga*. Less than a week later, the team found another hulk, the carrier *Akagi*. A remotely operated vehicle recorded clear footage of the *Kaga*, which lies some 17,000 feet below the surface, revealing identifying details and the damage done by U.S. forces.

"Unlike land battles, war at sea leaves no traces on the surface," said Frank Thompson, a historian from the Naval History and Heritage Command. The finds, he said, "will give historians a new perspective of one of World War II's pivotal battles."

◀ AN AMERICAN PROPAGANDA POSTER CELEBRATES THE U.S. VICTORY OVER THE IMPERIAL JAPANESE NAVY AT THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY IN JUNE 1942.
AKG/ALBUM/PICTURES FROM HISTORY

Cracking the Code

Six months before the Battle of Midway, the Japanese inflicted a devastating surprise attack on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, which prompted U.S. entry into World War II on December 8, 1941.

U.S. commanders knew its naval base on the Midway Atoll would be a logical next target. Located 1,300 miles northwest of Hawaii, this

SPIRAL OF THE *SORYU*

This iconic image of the Battle of Midway was taken from an American B-17 bomber and shows the Japanese aircraft carrier *Soryu* attempting to evade bombardment by executing a circular maneuver. At its launch in 1937, the I.J.N. *Soryu* was the fastest carrier in the world, but the ship's nimbleness did not save it at Midway: Attacked as its aircraft were refueling on June 4, 1942, the *Soryu* was damaged beyond repair and scuttled that same day.

RGP VENTURES/SUPERSTOCK/ALAMY

speck in the middle of the Pacific, would be high on Japan's list of potential sites.

To find out when and where Japan would strike, American cryptographers worked tirelessly to crack the 90,000-word Japanese codebook known as JN25. In the spring of 1942 they had revealed enough of its workings to decipher that the bulk of the Imperial Japanese Navy—including the *Akagi, Kaga, Hiryu,* and *Soryu*, four of the six aircraft carriers that had participated in Pearl Harbor—was preparing a strike on the Midway Atoll.

Pacific Payback

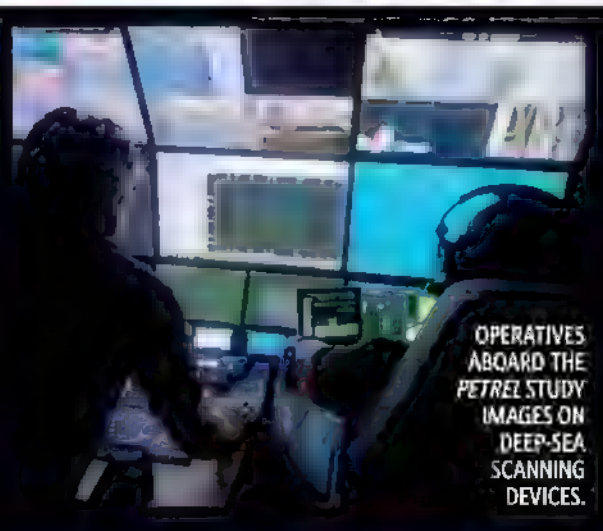
This time, however, the Americans would be ready. U.S. warships, supported by bombers from above, ambushed the Japanese fleet after it bombarded the tiny atoll on June 4, 1942. Victory was hard won: The United States lost the carrier *Yorktown,* and the destroyer *Hammann*.

Midway was a catastrophic loss for Japan that derailed its military efforts in the Pacific. In addition to the loss of the four carriers, more than 3,000 Japanese servicemen were killed, a death toll 10 times higher than the Americans'. Japan would not recover, and the defeat was not revealed to the Japanese public.

Nearly 80 years later, the operators of the *Petrel* are conscious of the human dimension of the find. Robert Kraft, director of subsea operations for Vulcan, said: "Every shipwreck we find reminds us all of the ultimate sacrifice made by those who served their countries."

Glimpsed in the Depths

BRISTLING WITH HIGH-TECH surveillance equipment, the *Petrel* is one of the few vessels that can explore the sea below 19,000 feet. Long-range sonar scanning revealed that the *Kaga* and the *Akagi* are resting more than three miles below the ocean's surface. Clear, close-up images of the *Kaga* reveal striking details of the sunken aircraft carrier's weaponry.



OPERATIVES ABOARD THE *PETREL* STUDY IMAGES ON DEEP-SEA SCANNING DEVICES.

A GUN AND SUPPORT BASE ON THE WRECK OF THE *KAGA*

WRECK OF THE *AKAGI* SEEN FROM ABOVE

I.J.N. *KAGA*

Formerly a battleship, the *Kaga* was converted into Japan's first heavy aircraft carrier in 1929. During the Battle of Midway it was attacked by around 30 American dive-bombers and received torpedo strikes from the American destroyer U.S.S. *Nautilus*. More than 800 of the crew perished. Pounded into inoperability, the *Kaga* was scuttled by the Japanese and left to sink.

I.J.N. *AKAGI*

Designed as a battle cruiser in the 1920s, the *Akagi* was converted into a carrier by the Imperial Japanese Navy in 1935, with the addition of her full-length flight deck. During the Battle of Midway, American dive-bombers inflicted fatal damage to it, including one particularly devastating hit delivered by pilot Richard Best. Soon after, the *Akagi* was scuttled by Japanese torpedoes.

SECTION OF THE *KAGA*'S EXHAUST

SIDE-SCAN SONAR IMAGE OF THE WRECK OF THE *AKAGI*

ALL IMAGES: VULCAN INC.

Christine de Pisan: France's First Lady of Letters

The brilliant poet, critic, and champion of women upended medieval norms by staying single and became France's first woman to make a living as a writer.

France's First Lady of Letters

1364

Christine de Pisan is born in Venice. At age four, she will move with her family to join the court of French king Charles V.

circa 1389

After a 10-year marriage, Christine becomes a widow and chooses to support her family through her writing

1400s

Christine's literary criticism centers on the literary portrayal of women. Her poems win her powerful patrons.

1405

The Book of the City of Ladies is published, in which Christine honors the role of notable women throughout history.

circa 1430

A year after her "Tale of Joan of Arc" celebrates the Maid of Orleans, Christine dies, around age 65.

For a daughter to receive the same education as a son was rare in the mid-14th century, and Christine de Pisan's childhood was one such exception. Born in Venice in 1364 and raised in France, Christine (also known as Christina) used the advantages of her early education to forge a prolific writing career to support herself and her family, an unprecedented achievement for the time. A poet and biographer, Christine celebrated remarkable female figures in her works, including an account of Joan of Arc written during her lifetime.

Christine's father was a Bolognese physician and astrologer, Tommaso da Pizzano. His reputation as an intellectual secured him employment as the court astrologer of King Charles V of France. Tommasso moved the family there when Christine was four. She had two younger brothers, and Tommasso—an open-minded man for the times—decided to provide a formal education for all three children. Christine received lessons in Greek, Latin, great works of literature, history, philosophy, and medicine. A voracious reader, she was known to have spent hours in the library of the royal palace of the Louvre, which had been founded by her father's patron, Charles V.

Wife Then Widow

Alongside her desire to soak up knowledge, Christine de Pisan also demonstrated precocious literary flair. As a child, she composed songs and ballads that delighted members of the court. Her father, who gained prestige in King Charles V's inner circle, did his utmost to ensure an advantageous marriage for his daughter as soon as she was old enough to wed. In 1379, age 15, Christine married Étienne du Castel, a notary and secretary to the king. It was, by Christine's own account, a blissfully happy union. The pair had three children: two sons and a daughter.

A few years later Christine lost her father, and then her husband died soon afterward in an epidemic (some sources say the bubonic plague) around 1389. At age 25, Christine became a widow with three children and a mother to support. Her brothers had returned to Italy and could not help her.

The conventional solution at the time would have been to seek out a new husband and remarry, but Christine took a different course of action. She decided to carry on alone and support her family with her own literary talents. As she wrote in her journal: "I had to become a man."

Conventional widows would have remarried, but Christine decided to earn her own living as a writer.

INKWELL, 15TH CENTURY, LOUVRE MUSEUM, PARIS

STÉPHANE MARÉCHALLE/RMN-GRAND PALAIS

PORTRAITS IN BLUE

CHRISTINE DE PISAN helped craft the beautifully illustrated manuscripts of her literary creations. Using her experience as manager of a scriptorium, she oversaw the work of skilled miniaturists to produce these detailed images. In some editions she is often the subject of the illustrations. In a 15th-century edition of her 1405 work *One Hundred Ballads of a Lover and a Lady*, she is shown working in her study (left). As in this image, she is often shown wearing a long blue dress and a white wimple, the standard attire across many other portraits of her.

CHRISTINE DE PISAN AT WORK, IN A MINIATURE FROM A 15TH-CENTURY EDITION OF *ONE HUNDRED BALLADS OF A LOVER AND A LADY*. BRITISH LIBRARY, LONDON

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

Working Woman

She found work as the manager of a scriptorium, where she supervised the work of calligraphers, bookbinders, and miniaturists. In her spare time she wrote, drawing on her wealth of reading. For additional income, Christine began sending the poems she composed to influential figures, hoping to attract their patronage.

Her boldness paid off, and she gained appreciative sponsors. Writing became Christine's livelihood, and she was able to support her family. Her principal patron and source of income was King Charles VI (the son of the French king Charles V, who died in 1380). Christine was able to attract more noble patrons, even some from outside France. They included Philip II of Burgundy, Queen Isabella of Bavaria, and England's Earl of Salisbury.

Beyond writing poetry, Christine proved to be an outspoken and influential social and literary critic. In the early 1400s she debated the king's secretaries about the moral fitness of the *Roman de la Rose*, a long allegorical poem first written by Guillaume de Lorris and then continued by Jean de Meun in the 13th century. Christine argued that the work's portrayal of women was problematic, attributing negative traits to allegorical female figures and also portraying women as mere objects to satisfy male desires. She was outspoken in her criticism of the work, helping to launch a more general debate in the French court about the status of women. She argued that women's inferior position was not natural, but cultural.

In 1405 Christine further explored her defense of women in what became one of her most famous works, *Le Livre de la cité des dames (The Book of the City*

The City of Ladies

These miniatures are from a French 15th-century illuminated manuscript of Christine de Pisan's allegorical work, *The Book of the City of Ladies.*

❶ *Inspiration*
Three Virtues—Reason (holding a mirror), Rectitude (a ruler), and Justice (a vessel)—tell Christine to build a city for heroines.
AKG/ALBUM

❷ *Protection*
A wall is one of the first things to be built in the City of Ladies. Its bricks and mortar will provide strength and protection.
AKG/ALBUM

❸ *Habitation*
With the city now completed, the valiant and virtuous women of antiquity are invited to enter the city.
BNF/RMN-GRAND PALAIS

❹ *Consecration*
Justice, Christine, and the renowned women (right) welcome the Virgin Mary and the saints, crowned by golden halos (left), to the city.
BNF/RMN-GRAND PALAIS

FIT FOR A QUEEN
Christine de Pisan kneels before Queen Isabella of Bavaria (left) to present her with *One Hundred Ballads of a Lover and a Lady* in a 15th-century illustration. British Library, London

BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

of Ladies). In it, Christine imagines a city occupied by remarkable women from history: the poet Sappho; Dido and Semiramis, founders of Carthage and Babylon; Zenoba, queen of Palmyra; Eve and Esther from the Hebrew scriptures; the Virgin Mary; St. Cecilia; and Queen Isabella of Bavaria.

City of Ladies highlights the importance of education to shaping virtuous and strong women. One passage reads: "If it were customary to send little girls to school like boys . . . they would learn as thoroughly the subtleties of all the arts and sciences." Christine points out that foolish men considered it bad for females to be educated "because it displeased them that women knew more than they did."

Life During Wartime

Christine's life unfolded amid the political turmoil of the Hundred Years' War, fought between France and England, a series of disputes over land and succession. With this conflict never far from her mind, Christine's writings extended to the virtues of good governance. In 1413 she penned one of her last major works, *Le Livre de la paix (The Book of Peace),* a series of governing advice for the heir to King Charles VI. Following England's invasion of France in 1415, Christine took refuge in a convent in Poissy, where years earlier her daughter had taken her vows. She stopped writing for many years.

Following England's invasion of France in 1415, Christine took refuge in a convent and stopped writing for many years.

After Charles died in 1422, his heirs battled for the French crown. Henry V of England backed one faction, the Burgundians, and the other was led by the future Charles VII. Christine found the war troubling but found hope after the siege of Orléans, a French victory in 1429 led by Joan of Arc. Inspired by the news, she took up her pen and wrote "Le Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc" ("The Tale of Joan of Arc"), hailing her as a new shining light for the French. Christine died around 65 in circa 1430, and her poem stands as the only work penned during the Maid of Orleans' lifetime.

Christine de Pisan's choice to become a professional writer allowed her to build a body of work and express new thinking about women. Centuries later Simone de Beauvoir, in her 1949 treatise *The Second Sex,* described her stance as "the first time a woman takes up her pen to defend her sex."

The "Imola Plan"

How Leonardo Redrew the Map

Leonardo da Vinci's 1502 map of a small Italian city transformed cartography from an art to a science.

At the beginning of the 16th century, Leonardo da Vinci returned to Florence after almost two decades in the employ of Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan. Nearing 50, Leonardo was already famed for his scientific genius and artistic achievements, including the design of an innovative catapult around 1485 and the fresco *The Last Supper* (1495–98). Combining practicality and observation, Leonardo applied the principle of *sapere vedere* (knowing how to see, in Latin) into as many areas of human inquiry as it led him.

Cesare Borgia of Florence, the ambitious son of Pope Alexander VI, became Leonardo's patron in 1502. One of the first tasks given to Leonardo was to create a map of the city of Imola, near Bologna. Borgia had seized the city in 1499. Moated and heavily fortified, it was a key conquest for the charismatic young commander. Controlling the city would require understanding its geography and landmarks, and Borgia wanted the map from the brilliant mind of Leonardo in order to do that.

In the 16th century city maps tended to be symbolic and often symbolic, piously inflating the size of religious buildings. Leonardo's "Imola Plan" radically broke with this tradition, aiming to reflect the reality on the ground, and to provide a map that was of more practical use.

Leonardo applied a mapping technique developed by Florentine humanist Leon Battista Alberti, who proposed that a town can be mapped using polar coordinates. Starting with Alberti's technique, Leonardo adapted it to capture more accurate distances, proportions, and relationships between features.

The city's piazza was fixed in the middle of the grid, and the eight principal directions of the compass radiated out from it. Historians believe that Leonardo collected data on the ground by starting at this central point and then using a compass and odometer to measure streets and landmarks. Using geometry, he could then fill in the rest of the map.

Leonardo's techniques rendered the first map that used data to accurately show a "flattened city" as it might be seen from above, what cartographers today call an ichnographic map, perhaps the most familiar type of map used today. Leonardo's measurements still hold up: According to historians, the "Imola Plan" can still be used to navigate the city five centuries later.

THE LINE OF BEAUTY

The "Imola Plan" is preserved today in the Leonardiano Museum in Vinci, Italy, the artist's hometown. In addition to its precision, Leonardo's revolutionary map also reveals the instincts of the artist. In contrast to the compass lines and street grid, the Santerno River at the bottom is rendered as a sinuous, free-flowing form.

PLAN OF THE CITY OF IMOLA,
BY LEONARDO DA VINCI, 1502.
LEONARDIANO MUSEJM, VINCI, ITALY

DEA/SCALA, F.ORENCE

THE EARP BROTHERS and their friend Doc Holliday advance on the "cowboys" in a dramatic oil painting by British artist Howard Morgan that re-creates the shoot-out at the O.K. Corral.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

Gunfight at the O.K. Corral: Truths and Legends

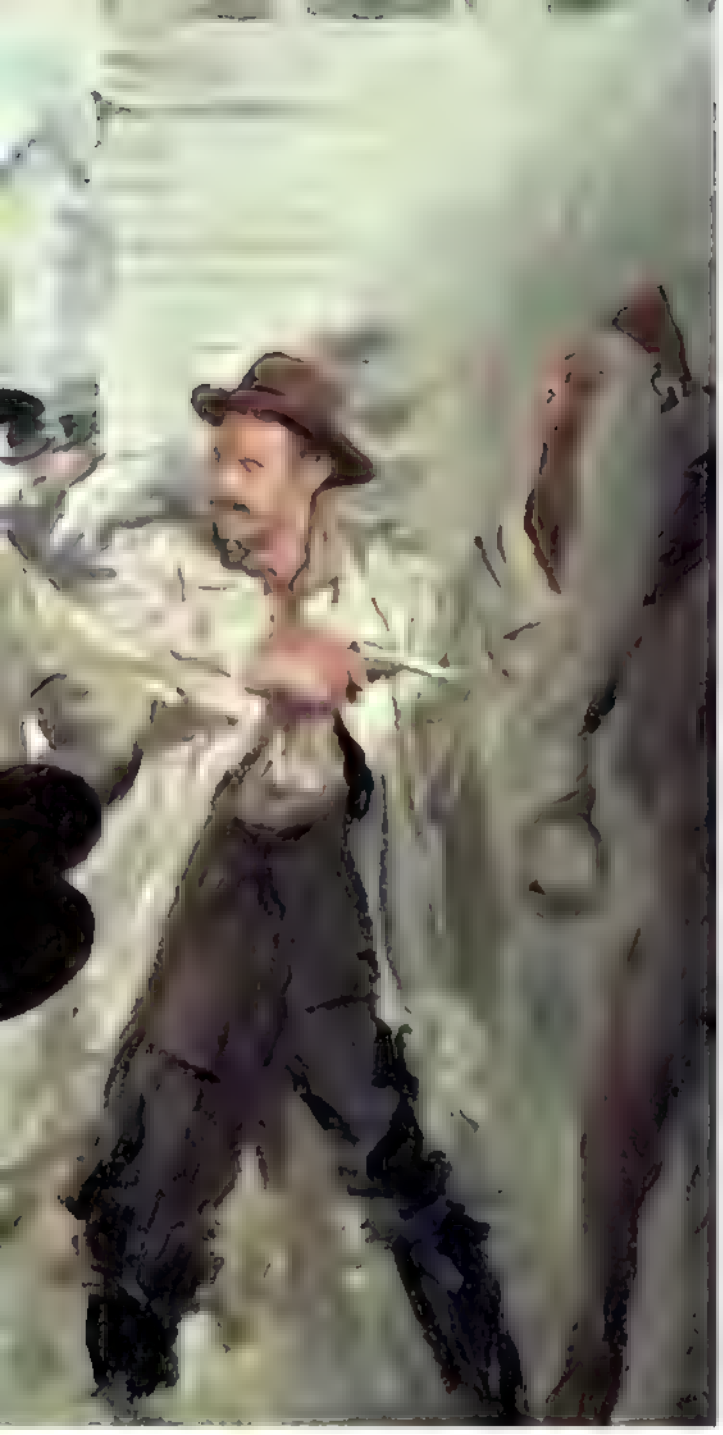
The lawless Western town of Tombstone was the setting for the most famous shoot-out in U.S. history, turning cowboys into villains and making Wyatt Earp a star.

The afternoon of October 26, 1881, gunfire erupted in the frontier town of Tombstone. The fighting was over in less than a minute, and when the gun smoke cleared, three men lay dead. This short skirmish might have been a footnote in American history, but it grew and became a legend, perhaps the most famous in the Old West.

A feud had been building between two rival factions in Tombstone. One was led by Kansas lawman Wyatt Earp, his brothers Virgil and Morgan, and their friend John "Doc" Holliday. The other was a loose band of outlaws called the "cowboys": Among their members were brothers Ike and Billy Clanton and brothers Tom and Frank McLaury. The rising tensions between the two groups revealed that the line between law enforcement and vendetta was very thin in the Arizona Territory.

Tombstone was founded a few years earlier by Ed Schieffelin, a former scout with the United States Army. Schieffelin headed to the Arizona Territory in the 1870s to strike it rich in mining. He found a promising spot in what is today southeastern Arizona, about 30 miles north of the Mexican border.

Schieffelin was warned by soldiers that, having chosen a spot in Apache territory, he was more likely to find his own tombstone than precious metals. When Schieffelin hit on a seam of silver there in 1877, he had the last laugh and called the claim Tombstone. The name was carried over as the name of the settlement founded near the site, fueled by a silver rush that attracted fortune hunters to the new town.



LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

THE SHOOT-OUT between the Earps and the cowboys did not technically take place at the Old Kindersley horse corral. The actual location was a vacant lot at the end of Fremont Street, Tombstone's main thoroughfare (shown above in 1882), which was located behind the O.K. Corral.

Brothers Against Brothers

By 1881 Tombstone had a population of more than 7,000 and was the seat of the newly formed Cochise County. The area was thriving but had a notorious reputation for being rough and lawless. The Earps were drawn to Tombstone by the promise of fortune from the silver rush. Wyatt Earp had served as a police officer in Wichita and Dodge City, Kansas, before he moved to Tombstone in late 1879. With him came his brother, Virgil, a miner and soldier who would become Tombstone's town marshal in 1880.

Morgan, a younger brother of Wyatt and Virgil, joined his siblings in Tombstone that same year. Shortly after came a man who had befriended Wyatt Earp in Dodge City: Doc Holliday, a former dentist from Georgia turned gambler and gunfighter. All the brothers had other income that was unrelated to law enforcement, with stakes in mines and saloons and occasional work as bartenders and private security.

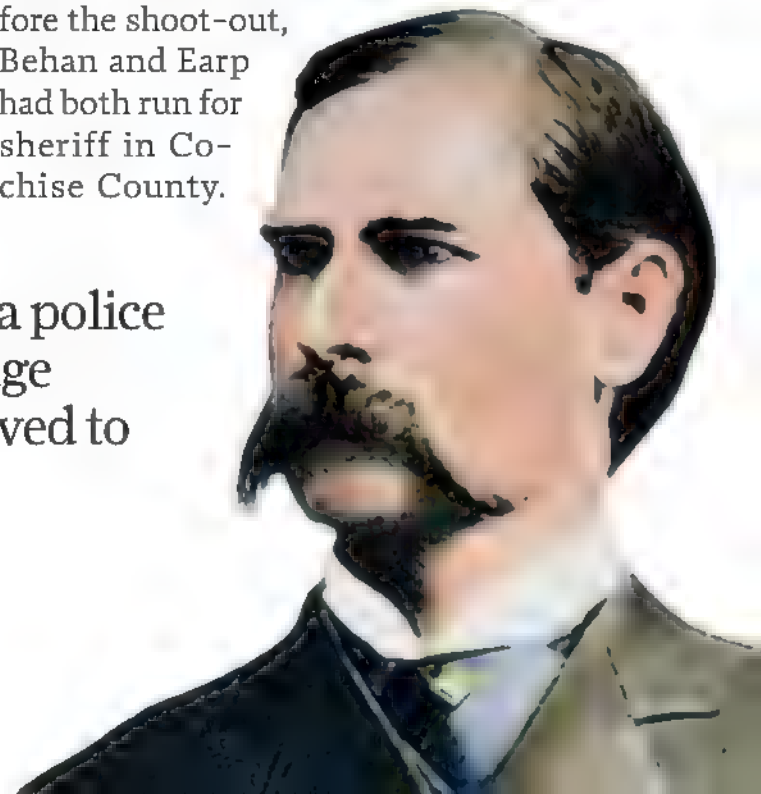
The Earp-Holliday faction had rivals in Tombstone: the cowboys. The Clanton and the McLaury brothers had a reputation as outlaws and were known to make their living thanks to cattle rustling. Beef shortages in the growing towns had given them a way of making easy money. They would rustle cattle on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border.

Keen to meet demand, the butchers in Tombstone were not particularly fussy about the meat's origins, particularly if it was from the other side of the frontier. The first source of tension between the cowboys and the Earps was over some stolen mules that the Earps tracked down to the McLaury ranch. The McLaurys, meanwhile, accused the Earps of acting for their own benefit instead of acting as law officers.

Politics and Pistols

Wyatt Earp developed a professional rivalry with a fellow politician, Johnny Behan. Ten months before the shoot-out, Behan and Earp had both run for sheriff in Cochise County.

Wyatt Earp had served as a police officer in Wichita and Dodge City, Kansas, before he moved to Tombstone in late 1879.



WYATT EARP IN A COLORED, 19TH-CENTURY PHOTOGRAPH

GRANGER/AURIMAGES

THE THREE MEN killed by the Earp brothers and Holliday were photographed in their caskets: (from left to right) Billy Clanton and the brothers Frank and Tom McLaury.

GRANGER/AURIMAGES

Partway into the race, Behan had convinced Earp to pull out, promising him the job of under sheriff in return. After securing the office of county sheriff, Behan reneged on the deal and appointed another man to the position, leading to the two men's mutual enmity.

Guns in Tombstone

In October 1881 an ordinance was passed in Tombstone prohibiting the carrying of weapons in town. This riled the cowboys, who were used to carrying their weapons wherever they pleased. As town marshal, Virgil Earp was responsible for enforcing the law and wanted to disarm the offenders.

A heated argument took place between Doc Holliday and Ike Clanton at the Alhambra saloon on the night of October 25, 1881. The fight was broken up, but Clanton continued to drink into the morning. Making threats against Holliday and the Earps, Clanton was armed with several guns, accounts say.

Virgil Earp disarmed Clanton, took him before a judge, who imposed a fine before letting him go. Ike, infuriated, sought out a group of five cowboys, including his brother Billy and the McLaurys, and went with them to Fremont Street. They spread the word that they were armed and intended to remain so. Sheriff Behan met the cowboys and tried to talk them into surrendering their weapons but failed. Sources differ: Some say the cowboys either denied having guns on them or refused to surrender them.

Behan then met with Virgil Earp, who had deputized his brothers and Doc Hol-

HOLLYWOOD LEGENDS

THE MOVIES HELPED MAKE a small-town shoot-out into a legend. John Ford directed and Henry Fonda starred as Wyatt Earp in the 1946 film *My Darling Clementine*, which was a heavily fictionalized version of the events leading up to the famous gunfight. Tombstone proved a popular subject for Hollywood, which has told and retold the story of the Earps at least 10 different times on the big screen.

MY DARLING CLEMENTINE (1946), MOVIE POSTER
ALBUM

IN BOOTHILL GRAVEYARD in Tombstone, Arizona, headstones mark the resting places of the three men killed in the 1881 shoot-out at the O.K. Corral.

DENNIS MACDONALD/AGE FOTOSTOCK

liday. The sheriff tried to convince the Earps to back off, but they pressed on, finding the Clantons and the McLaurys in a lot near the Old Kindersley Corral.

Shots erupted, but no one knows who fired first. The fight was over as quickly as it began. Billy Clanton and Tom and Frank McLaury were dead. Ike Clanton and two other cowboys had escaped the same fate. On the Earps' side, all survived, but only Wyatt remained unharmed.

Under Tombstone law, policemen were in the right if they shot armed opponents threatening to kill. After the shooting, Ike Clanton accused the marshal's group of firing at five unarmed men, leading Sheriff Behan to arrest the Earp brothers and Holliday, accusing them of murder. During a preliminary hearing that lasted a month, it was proven that two of the cowboys had been armed. The judge threw out the trial, but lingering doubts about the Earps' true intentions that day would remain.

The shooting brought terrible consequences for both the Earps and the cowboys. On December 28, 1881, Virgil Earp was ambushed and shot in the back on his way home. His injuries left him alive, but seriously injured. In March of the following year, Morgan Earp was killed. The assailants were never positively identified, but many believe the two Earps were gunned down as revenge for the events at the O.K. Corral.

Shortly after these events, Wyatt Earp became a deputy U.S. marshal. He deputized several men, including Doc Holliday, and set out on a vendetta against the men he believed responsible for the death of his brother. Four cowboys, including one of Sheriff Behan's aides, were killed. Behan acquired an arrest warrant and pursued Earp and his men, without success. Wyatt Earp left Arizona Territory in April 1882, later settling in California with his partner, Josephine Marcus, Behan's former girlfriend.

Men and Myths

The story of the O.K. Corral soon became part the frontier myth. Wyatt Earp's colorful life as a lawman, gambler, miner, pimp, and saloon owner made him a natural target for colorful anecdotes, but he was reluctant to discuss openly what happened during those fateful seconds in Tombstone.

In 1931, two years after Earp's death, Stuart N. Lake, a former press aide to President Theodore Roosevelt, published *Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal,* a biography that included a dramatic telling of the shoot-out at the O.K. Corral and other events in Earp's life. The book was extremely successful and elevated Earp to almost mythic status by simplifying the story. Lake made Wyatt the hero and the cowboys the villains. The truth, however—like the line dividing law and vengeance in those wilder times—is much blurrier.

—Fernando Martín

HITTITES

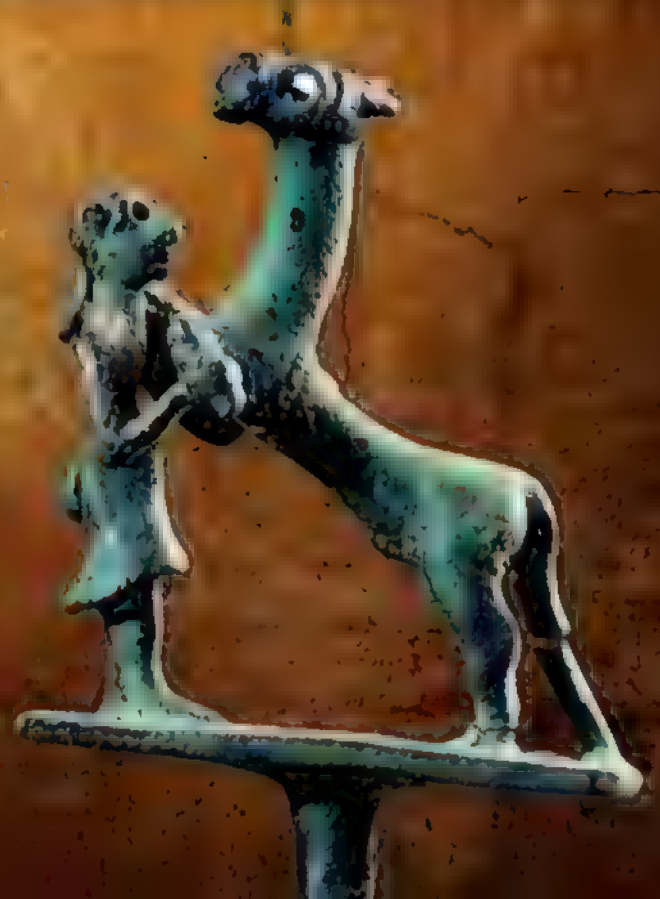
MASTERS OF THE WAR CHARIOT

HUNTED DOWN
Charioteers chase a lion in a hunt scene on a neo-Hittite relief made around 750 B.C., and displayed in the Pergamon Museum, Berlin. The bronze Hittite bridle clip (below), depicting a man and a horse, is from the 19th century B.C. Louvre, Paris.

RELIEF: PAUL WILLIAMS/ALAMY/ACI BRIDLE CLIP: DEA/ALBUM

A great empire more than 3,000 years ago, the Hittite civilization rose to power waging war from the wheels of their chariots. Deploying a fleet of thousands, the Hittites battled Egyptians for dominance in the eastern Mediterranean.

LUIS ALBERTO RUIZ



CLASH AT KADESH
In a relief from Abu Simbel (above), Ramses II fires arrows from his chariot (top left) surrounded by swarms of smaller attacking Hittite charioteers.

ARALDO DE LUCA

For an Egyptian noble, living in or just after the time of Ramses II, the truth must have seemed clear and simple: In a heroic push to regain their former imperial lands in Syria, their great pharaoh had waged war against the Hittites at the Battle of Kadesh in 1275 B.C., where he had won a resounding victory.

Ramses was as much a master of public relations as he was of war, and historians now know that the Battle of Kadesh was not a definitive victory over the Hittites. It was almost certainly a draw. As masters of an empire that stretched through much of modern Turkey to parts of Syria, the Hittites were a worthy, formidable opponent. Based in their fortified capital of Hattusa (about 130 miles east of Ankara, Turkey, today), they rose to regional dominance in part because of their mastery of the chariot. Facing ranks of thousands of their chariots at Kadesh was certainly something for Ramses the Great to boast about.

The official Egyptian record of the "victory," the Poem of Pentaur, was inscribed on Ramses' temples, including Abu Simbel in southern Egypt. The poem recounts how the Hittite king Muwatallis II "had sent men and horses, multitudinous as the sands. . . . The charioteers of His Majesty [Ramses] were discomfited before them, but His Majesty stood firm."

CA. 2600 B.C.

WAR ON WHEELS

The Standard of Ur casket depicts a driver of a Sumerian chariot with solid wooden wheels. This early form of the chariot would come to dominate Bronze Age warfare.

THE STANDARD OF UR (DETAIL). BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON
SCALA, FLORENCE

The battle between the Hittites and the Egyptians is regarded by historians as the largest chariot battle in history. The extraordinary clash would maintain the Hittites as major regional players for years to come.

Fall and Rise

Many scholars believe the ancestors of the Hittite people originally lived in central Asia before relocating to Anatolia (modern Turkey) in the third millennium B.C. The area was already inhabited by people known as Hattians and Hurrians who spoke different languages than the newcomers. The Hittite language belonged to the Indo-European family of languages, the group to which many of the world's spoken languages belong.

By the 17th century B.C., the Hittites were emerging as a growing military power under King Labarnas I. His son, Labarnas II, established the capital city at the already established site of Hattusa, changing his name to Hattusilis in honor of the new royal seat. While his father had strengthened the Hittite state, Hattusilis expanded out to the edge of the Mitanni empire, a Hurrian-speaking power to the east.

After Hattusilis' territorial expansion came a contraction and

WATER AND HORSES

A driver riding a two-horse chariot (below) appears atop this Assyrian vessel made in the 19th century B.C. Archaeological Museum, Ankara, Turkey

DEA/A.BJM

CA 1650 B.C.

Advances in war chariot design render a swifter model that features two spoked wheels. The Hittites rely on it in their military efforts in the eastern Mediterranean.

CA 1350 B.C.

Charioteers now make up a major wing of Hittite forces. The Hittites are resurgent under King Suppiluliumas I, who defies Egypt and occupies much of northern Syria.

1275 B.C.

The forces of Hittite king Muwatallis II and Pharaoh Ramses II of Egypt face off in history's largest chariot battle at the Battle of Kadesh.

MOUNTED WARRIOR

A neo-Hittite relief (above) dates to the ninth century B.C. It was found on a stone block from the temple of ancient Tall Halaf, northern Syria, near the Turkish border.

PAUL WILLIAMS/ALAMY/AC

HITTITE HORSE WHISPERER

Chariots are only as good as the animals that draw them, making a supply of healthy, well-trained horses a priority to the Hittites. A fascinating text on equine management, dated to the 13th century B.C., was found at the ancient site of the Hittite capital Hattusa. It begins with the words "Thus [speaks] Kikkuli, the horse trainer of the land of Mitanni." An immigrant in the service of the Hittite king, Kikkuli's vocabulary is of great interest to historians: a mixture of Hittite, his native Hurrian, as well as a smattering of other words from the Middle East. The text is divided into three parts. First, Kikkuli explains the four-day process of selecting the right animals. Then, he details a training method that begins in autumn and lasts for 184 days. The routine starts with the horses practicing exercises without pulling any weight to build up their stamina and help prevent injury. The third section gives instructions on how the horses should be fed and watered. The focus is entirely equestrian, and does not dwell on the other, vital component of a chariot: the drivers.

civil wars. As the Hittite princes squabbled over succession, their enemies were able to conquer Hattusilis' hard-won conquests.

An edict by the 16th-century B.C. king Telepinus standardized Hittite royal succession. The law also included an account of ancient Hittite kings, a valuable future source for historians studying Hittite culture. Despite Telepinus's attempt to restore order and return strength to the Hittites, several weak leaders followed his reign during this period, which historians call the Hittite Old Kingdom.

In the 15th century B.C., Pharaoh Thutmose III had become Egypt's great empire builder, extending Egyptian control farther and farther east into Syria. When the Mitanni entered into an alliance with the Egyptians in the early 14th century B.C., the beleaguered Hittite kings grew uneasy at this new relationship.

Beset on all sides, the Hittites could have fallen, but a strong ruler raised them up. Suppiluliumas I enjoyed a long reign (1380–1346 B.C.) and helped turn the Hittites into a new imperial force. Exploiting Mitanni weakness, Suppiluliumas conquered northern Syria and installed his sons as kings of Aleppo and Karkemish.

Opening with Suppiluliumas's reign and continuing with his heirs, a three-way power struggle developed with Egypt and the rising power of Assyria to the east. In the decades that followed, the Hittites owed their military successes to their mastery of the war chariot.

Early chariots in Mesopotamia often had four solid wheels and were drawn by oxen, donkeys, or mules.

Wheeled Victories

The earliest chariots appeared in Mesopotamia around 3000 B.C. They were very different from the familiar horse-drawn vehicles seen in ancient Greece and Rome. Early prototypes often had four solid wheels, and their main purpose

was for use in parades and funerary rites. These vehicles were not pulled by horses, but by oxen and other draft animals, or equids such as donkeys or mules. The Standard of Ur, a casket from the Sumerian city of Ur dating to around 2600 B.C., features a chariot that looks like a solid-wheeled wagon pulled by either mules or donkeys.

The beginning of the second millennium B.C. was a period of rapid change for chariot building. In this period, the horse was first used as a draft animal, and wheels became increasingly spoked, and therefore much lighter. The advances in speed and mobility that resulted from these innovations led to the chariot becoming essential military equipment in the Bronze Age.

Two-wheeled models were acquired for military use by the leading powers of the day, including the Egyptians and the Hittites. In 1650 B.C., during the siege of a city called Urshu, the Hittite king Hattusilis mentions 30 Hittite chariots ranged against 80 chariots belonging to his Hurrian enemies. The Hittite fleet of chariots would grow exponentially in subsequent centuries, from tens to hundreds, and later, to thousands.

Anatolian techniques of bending and shaping wood helped the Hittites develop sophisticated two-wheeled models. The imperial-era Hittites left little illustrative evidence behind of such vehicles (although, following the collapse of the Hittite Empire, craftsmen in surviving Hittite enclaves did leave artworks that depict chariots). Other evidence tells historians that by the 17th century B.C., Hittite chariots had developed lighter wheels.

Unlike Egyptian two-man chariots, the Hittite model could carry three people: the driver, a warrior armed with lances or bow and arrows, and a shield bearer. The latter was tethered to the back section of the carriage, lending stability during tight maneuvers.

IMPERIAL GROWTH

The Hittite Empire expanded (above) westward through Anatolia, and eastward into the contested lands of Syria and Mitanni in the 14th century B.C.

EOSG S.COM/NG MAPS

A KING HUNTS FROM A CHARIOT, AS DEPICTED ON A GOLDEN PLATE FROM UGARIT, A SYRIAN KINGDOM WITH CLOSE TIES TO THE HITTITES. 15TH OR 14TH CENTURY B.C., LOUVRE MUSEUM, PARIS

DAGLI ORTI/AJR IMAGES

Chariot Diplomacy

Advances in Hittite chariot design coincided with the rise of the Hittite Empire as a powerful player in the eastern Mediterranean. Able to mount rapid surprise attacks, chariots played a key role in King Suppiluliumas I's conquests of Syria and the forging of Hittite regional supremacy in the 14th century B.C.

One sign that the Hittites had returned as major players in the region was a letter from an Egyptian queen to Suppiluliumas I. The pharaoh had recently died (scholars believe it was most likely Tutankhamun, but it could have been his father, Akhenaten). She asked him to send one of his sons in marriage. Unfortunately for Hittite-Egyptian relations, the son, when he arrived, was killed by an Egyptian faction who opposed the queen.

Hittites recorded this offense in one of the "plague prayers" inscribed during the rule of Suppiluliumas's successor, Mursilis II. The words show the central role chariots played in both the war and regional diplomacy that followed:

> *My father sent infantry and chariot fighters and they attacked the border territory. And, moreover, he sent (more troops); and again, they attacked. [The] men of Egypt became afraid. They came, and they asked my father outright for his son for kingship. And when they led him away, they killed him. And my father became angry, and he went into Egyptian territory, and he attacked the infantry and chariot fighters of Egypt.*

EQUINE LIFE

Depictions of horsemen, such as an eighth-century B.C. stonework found in the capital of one of the neo-Hittite kingdoms (below), were popular even after the decline of the Hittite Empire.

ALAMY/ACI

Suppiluliumas was killed by plague, as the existence of the plague poems indicates. His son Mursilis II took the throne, but his reign was overshadowed by pestilence. Although he had to put down constant challenges to his rule, he passed on a stable and expanding empire to his son,

LION'S ROAR
The Lion Gate (above) was one of the entrances to Hattusa, the Hittite capital city. Following its destruction in the early 14th century B.C., Hattusa was rebuilt and fortified under King Suppiluliumas I.
PAUL WILLIAMS/ALAMY/AC

who would play a fateful role in Hittite history. The new king was Muwatallis II, who faced Ramses II at Kadesh in 1275 B.C.

Biggest Battle

The site of the city of Kadesh lies near Homs in western Syria. In 1275 B.C. it was held by the Hittites. By taking it, Ramses would neutralize the Hittite threat to his northern sphere of interest, and claim the territories once captured by Thutmose III, and since lost.

The Egyptian sources for the battle recount how Ramses' army had been misled into believing the Hittites were far away. On approaching the city, the Egyptians were surprised by the enemy who were concealed behind the town.

Some 3,000 Hittite chariots and 40,000 foot soldiers smashed into the smaller Egyptian force, which was scattered by the charge. The Egyptian record of the battle uses the imagery of massed chariots to highlight Ramses' heroic solitude at this moment: "There is no one at my side . . . But I find that [the god] Amun's grace is better far to me than ten thousand chariots."

Ramses rallied his forces and managed to fight the battle to a respectable draw, later claiming victory. Despite the boastful claims of his Abu Simbel reliefs, the Hittites continued to dominate Syria. In 1258 B.C., in another sign of Hittite regional strength, Ramses concluded a peace treaty with them. In 1245 B.C. he married a Hittite princess.

The Hittite Empire would decline in the 12th century B.C., but the precise cause is unknown. Some archaeologists believe the Sea Peoples, a loose confederation of maritime powers, were responsible. The Hittite Empire fell, although remnants of Hittite rule continued in enclaves such as Karkemish, known by historians as the neo-Hittite kingdoms.

While Egyptologists had built up a complex picture of the millennial pharaonic culture, Hattusa was only excavated beginning in the early 20th century. The discoveries of Hittite texts have helped give historians an entirely different, more balanced perspective on the Battle of Kadesh.

LUIS ALBERTO RUIZ S ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ANCIENT HISTORY AT THE COMPLUTENSE UNIVERSITY OF MADRID, SPAIN

QUICKER, LIGHTER, DEADLIER

Appearing in the third millennium B.C. in Mesopotamia, early chariots were slow and heavy—designed for hauling, not fighting. The emergence of spoked wheels in the second millennium B.C. enabled the building of lighter, faster models. As well as military use, chariots were flaunted as displays of royal strength and power.

▲ **SUMERIAN** Developing from wheeled wagons, war chariots became widespread in Mesopotamian cities of the third millennium B.C. They would have been pulled not by horses, but by donkeys or mules. Four wheels were made of solid, heavy boards, which made maneuvering cumbersome. Depictions of Sumerian chariots often feature a quiver mounted on the exterior.

ALL CHARIOT ILLUSTRATIONS: SOL 90/ALBUM

◀ **A STONE RELIEF** DEPICTS A CHARIOT CRUSHING AN ENEMY IT WAS CREATED IN THE TENTH TO EIGHTH CENTURIES B.C. IN THE NEO-HITTITE KINGDOM OF KARKEMISH, SYRIA. MUSEUM OF ANATOLIAN CIVILIZATIONS, ANKARA, TURKEY

PETER HORREE/ALAMY/AC.

▶ **HITTITE** The use of horses to draw two-wheeled battle chariots began during the rise of the Hittite Old Kingdom around 1650 B.C. Later, massed ranks of three-man chariots became a feared symbol of Hittite power in their 13th-century B.C. heyday.

◀ **EGYPTIAN** The introduction of the light chariot in Egypt has been attributed to the Hyksos, who invaded the Nile Delta around 1650 B.C. Lighter than the Hittite model, and crewed only by two men (a driver and an archer), their lightness could be an advantage when needing to maneuver quickly on the battlefield.

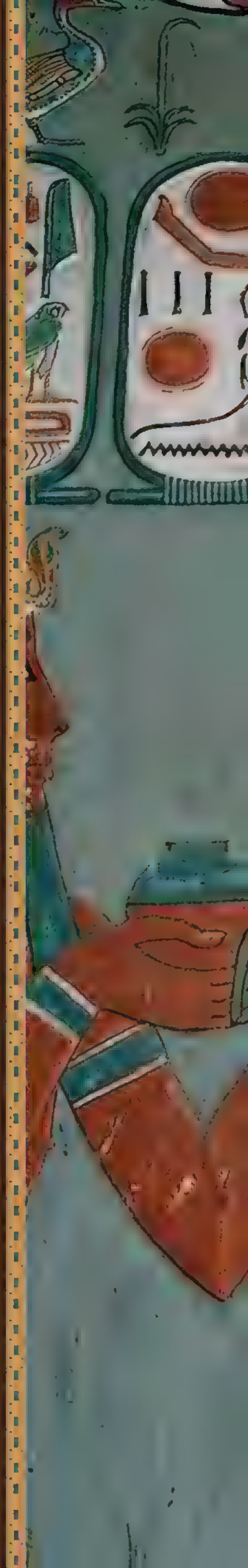
▶ **NEO-ASSYRIAN** By the ninth century B.C., the Assyrians started to make war chariots sturdier, at the expense of speed. Their crews could number between three or four men, whose firepower and bulk would make for an intimidating sight.

ISIS

Egypt's Enduring Mother Goddess

For two millennia Egyptians worshipped Isis, a divine mother, healer, and protector of the dead. As new powers ruled Egypt, her cult would spread far and wide—beyond Egypt to all corners of the Roman Empire.

JAIME ALVAR



EGYPT'S PROTECTRESS
A mural depicting Isis adorns the 14th-century B.C. tomb of Horemheb, in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt. Opposite: An openwork wooden panel depicts Isis spreading her protective wings around a pharaoh of the sixth century B.C. Archaeological Civic Museum of Bologna, Italy

MURAL: DEA/G.SIOEN/GETTY IMAGES, PANEL: SCALA, FLORENCE

ISIS EMBRACES THE PHARAOH RAMSES III (LEFT). RELIEF FROM THE 12TH-CENTURY B.C. TOMB OF PRINCE AMUN-HER-KHEPESHEF.

UNIVERSAL HISTORY ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

GOLDEN FAMILY

Isis, wearing a horned solar disk, and her son Horus gesture to the seated Osiris on a ninth-century B.C. gold pendant (below). Louvre Museum, Paris

SCALA, FLORENCE

Archaeologists working in London in 1912 might have been surprised. When they discovered a first-century A.D. Roman jug bearing the inscription "*Londini ad fanum Isidis*—London, next door to the Temple of Isis." Best known as an Egyptian goddess, finding signs of Isis worship so far from North Africa might seem odd. But this goddess proved popular enough to transcend her original Egyptian centers of worship and expand to all corners of the known world.

Isis was loved by ancient Egyptians for her fierce devotion to her husband Osiris and her son Horus. Her cult first began to spread around the Mediterranean following the establishment of Hellenist rule in Egypt in the fourth century B.C. Then as Roman power expanded, worship of Isis went even farther afield.

By the second century A.D., the Roman writer Apuleius would glorify her as the "mother of stars, the parent of seasons, and the mistress of all the world." Yet while she meant many things to many cultures across the Roman world, her roots lie in a very specific place and time: the Nile Delta at the dawn of ancient Egyptian history.

Egyptian Origins

Isis is the Greek form of the goddess's name, which in ancient Egyptian was Aset, meaning "seat" or "throne." Depicted as a slim woman wearing a sheath dress, she is often shown with a throne on her head. As her divine roles diversified, her appearance would change. Hathor, an early Egyptian goddess of motherhood, was often shown with a solar disk and cow horns. As Isis became closely linked to maternity, her headdress morphed and became like Hathor's. Isis's ability to absorb new traits would prove valuable to the longevity and spread of her worship throughout the ancient world.

In one of the most popular tellings of the Isis myth, she is one of the children of the gods Geb, god of the earth, and Nut, goddess of the sky. She marries one of her brothers, the god Osiris, and the pair rule the world. Osiris is murdered by his jealous younger brother Set, who dismembers the body and scatters it. Grieving, Isis searches the world to collect the pieces and puts him back together. Osiris is revived, but rather than being the lord of the living, Osiris becomes lord of the dead. Isis gives birth to a son, Horus (a popular art motif depicts Isis nursing her infant son).

OUT OF EGYPT

3RD MILLENNIUM B.C.
The Pyramid Texts establish the role of Isis as protector of her consort Osiris, her son Horus, and of the pharaoh in the afterlife.

4TH CENTURY B.C.
Under the new regime of the Greek Ptolemy pharaohs, Isis acquires Greek traits. Her cult travels well beyond Egypt's borders along trade routes.

ISLAND OF ISIS
The Temple of Isis stands today on the Nile island of Agilkia, relocated from Philae in the 1970s. Built in the Ptolemaic period, it was among Egypt's most important centers of worship.

ALEXIS BELLAGAMBA/FOTOLIA

1ST CENTURY B.C.
The Isis cult has extended across the Mediterranean in the form of the Isis Mysteries, a Roman-era rite centered on the afterlife.

30 B.C.
Rome conquers Egypt. The Isis cult in Rome survives persecution to flourish through the next centuries of the imperial period.

6TH CENTURY A.D.
The Christian Byzantine emperor Justinian closes the Temple of Isis at Philae, ending the worship of the goddess in Egypt.

GIVER OF LIFE
Large numbers of statuettes were produced in Egypt depicting Isis nursing the child Horus, a pose that underlined the goddess's sacred role in birth and motherhood. This statue was made sometime in the period between 600 B.C. and 300 B.C.
Louvre Museum, Paris

GEORGES PONCET/RMN-GRAND PALAIS

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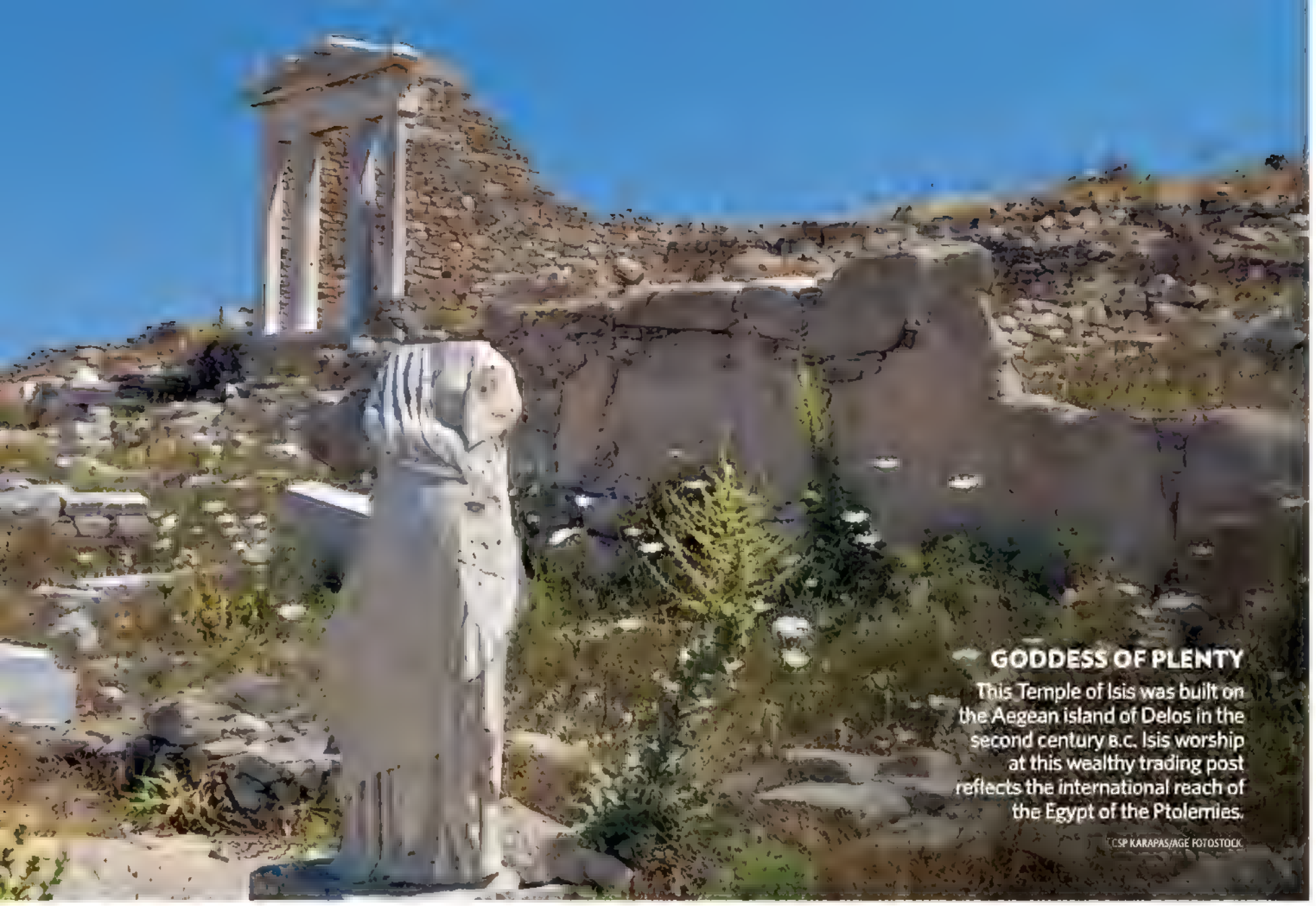


GODDESS OF PLENTY
This Temple of Isis was built on the Aegean island of Delos in the second century B.C. Isis worship at this wealthy trading post reflects the international reach of the Egypt of the Ptolemies.

CSP KARAPAS/AGE FOTOSTOCK

SHAKEN LIKE A RATTLE, THE SISTRUM WAS USED IN THE WORSHIP OF ISIS AND IS A PART OF THE GODDESS'S ICONOGRAPHY. AN UNDATED BRONZE SPECIMEN (LEFT) WAS DISCOVERED NEAR THE TEMPLE OF ISIS IN ROME. LOUVRE MUSEUM, PARIS

DEA/SCALA, FLORENCE

Horus grows up to banish Set, restoring order to the world.

The earliest mention of Isis can be found in the Pyramid Texts, sacred inscriptions carved in tomb walls of pyramids in Saqqara dating back to the Old Kingdom (circa 2575–2150 B.C.). Among the most ancient sacred writings, these texts center on pharaonic funerary rituals and beliefs about the journey of kings through the afterlife.

At first Isis was only worshipped in the Nile Delta where she originated, but she grew to become an important deity for the whole of ancient Egypt.

Known for her magic, her beneficent power encompassed both daily life and the afterlife. As Egyptian notions of the afterlife became more democratic, she was considered the protector of all the dead across Egyptian society, not just the pharaohs and their families at the top. Egyptian women regarded her as the model mother and wife. Her reputation as one of the warmest and most humane of the gods would later win hearts outside Egypt.

From Egypt to Greece

When Alexander the Great conquered Egypt in 332 B.C., the worship of Isis would flourish and expand beyond Egypt. Rather than censor Egyptians' local religion, Alexander embraced it. While visiting the city of Memphis, Alexander made sacrifices to Apis, an Egyptian bull god also associated with Osiris, and connected the deity's power to his own reign.

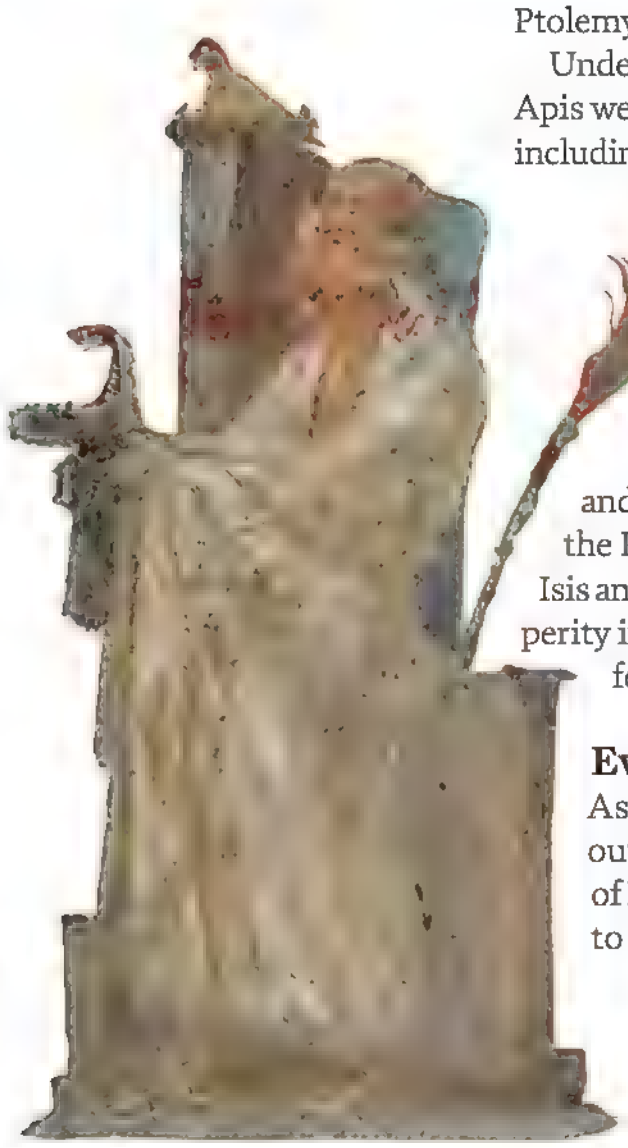
Following Alexander's death in 323 B.C., one of his generals, Ptolemy I Soter, took control of Egypt and continued the practice of religious tolerance. This dynasty, the so-called Ptolemies, would continue to unite the new Macedon elite with the local Egyptian population through faith. Located in Upper Egypt near the border of modern Sudan, the island of Philae was sacred to Isis. Temples had been built to her there since the sixth century B.C. Construction on an impressive new temple for Isis began shortly before Alexander's conquest and was finished by Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his successor,

FERTILE TRADE

With Isis remodeled as a Greco-Egyptian goddess, the cult of Isis was centered in Alexandria, where a medallion bearing her likeness was struck in the first century a.c.

AKG/ALBUM

HISTORIANS BELIEVE THAT THE FIGURES DEPICTED ON THIS FIRST-CENTURY A.D. TOMB NEAR ROME ARE EGYPTIANS PARTICIPATING IN THE WORSHIP OF ISIS.
DEA/ALBUM



A PRIEST OF ISIS DEPICTED IN A FRESCO FROM THE TEMPLE OF ISIS, POMPEII. NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, NAPLES
SCALA, FLORENCE

Ptolemy III Euergetes, in the third century B.C.

Under Ptolemaic rule, aspects of Osiris and Apis were combined with traits of Greek gods, including Zeus and Hades, to create a syncretic deity, Serapis. His association with the underworld, and therefore with Osiris, helped the framers of the new Ptolemaic cult settle on Isis as Serapis's consort.

Their center of worship was in Alexandria, a major commercial center under the Ptolemies. To Alexandrian merchants, Isis and Serapis became associated with prosperity in addition to the afterlife, healing, and fertility.

Evolution of a Goddess

As Ptolemaic influence spread throughout the eastern Mediterranean, worship of Isis also traveled along the trade routes to the coastlines of modern-day Syria, Israel, and Turkey. She became linked with regional deities. In Greece Isis was originally linked with Demeter, goddess of agriculture. In and around Lebanon she was associated with the Middle Eastern goddess Astarte. In Roman cities she was linked with Fortuna, goddess of luck, and Venus, goddess of love. The first- and second-century A.D. writer Plutarch likened her to Persephone, consort of Hades, the lord of the underworld.

Temples to Isis were erected throughout the Mediterranean world. Among them was the Temple of Isis on Delos in the Aegean, a tiny, arid island that became an important trading post in the Ptolemaic era. The impressive Doric Temple of Isis, whose ruins still stand on the island, was built in the early second century B.C. Roman merchants operating on Delos adopted the Isis cult they found there and took it back with them when they returned to Naples, Campania, Ostia, Rome, and Sicily. Isis had become an emblem of Ptolemaic hegemony; by the first century B.C., her cult reached as far west as Spain.

As worship of Isis continued to spread, the goddess's responsibilities expanded as well.

THE NILE IN ITALY

Pompeii's Temple of Isis, dating to the late second century B.C., was damaged in an earthquake and rebuilt by a rich benefactor in the years preceding the city's destruction by the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79. Water brought from the Nile was contained in a cistern below the structure and used in worship.

PHAS/GETTY IMAGES

WESTWARD EXPANSION

A temple honoring Isis was built in the first century B.C. in Sabratha in modern-day Libya. An important commercial port city in Roman times, Sabratha made its fortune as a terminus of the trans-Saharan caravan routes.

SUSANNA WYATT/AWL IMAGES

ISIS, SEATED, WELCOMES IO, LOVER OF ZEUS, TO EGYPT IN A FIRST-CENTURY A.D. FRESCO FROM THE TEMPLE OF ISIS, POMPEII. NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, NAPLES

FOGLIA/SCALA, FLORENCE

BRONZE CANDELABRA, LIKE THIS REPRODUCTION (LEFT), WERE DISCOVERED IN THE TEMPLE OF ISIS, POMPEII, AND USED IN CULTIC WORSHIP NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, NAPLES

SCALA, FLORENCE

In addition to her traditional roles as wife, mother, healer, and protector of the dead, Isis was worshipped as the goddess of good fortune, the sea, and travel. Sailors revered her: A festival held every spring became associated with Isis and was later known across the Roman world as Navigium Isidis. Many cities that depended on maritime trade, such as Pompeii, looked to Isis to defend them from the caprices of Neptune. One of the best preserved temples of Isis can be found in Pompeii. Built in the first century A.D., its frescoes depict Isis as Roman worshippers would have imagined her: in a Hellenized form, rather than Egyptian.

Mysteries of Worship

By the first century B.C., Isis worship had become established as a "mystery religion." Rooted in Greek culture, mystery faiths centered on a figure of a god or goddess—such as Demeter or Dionysus—and involved confidential rituals and rites. Participation in these sects was highly secretive, and few details of their ceremonies survive. In the writings of Plutarch, a few details can be found. Initiates donned colorful robes and shaved off their hair. During their initiations and other rituals, they carried the sistrum, a large rattle associated with the goddess. Historians remain unsure of certain details, such as how the religion was organized and if there was any hierarchy at all.

Roman rulers were not as fond of Isis as Alexander the Great's generals had been centuries before. Rome tried to suppress the popular cult several times. In the first century B.C., Queen Cleopatra of Egypt had closely linked herself with the goddess Isis, claiming to be her manifestation on Earth. When she and Mark Antony challenged the authority of Octavian (the future Roman emperor Augustus), the cult of Isis became a symbol of foreign corruption. After Cleopatra's death in 30 B.C., Ptolemaic rule of Egypt came to an end, Roman control of Egypt began, and the worship of Isis in Rome was suppressed.

Later emperors ordered her temples to be destroyed, but worship of Isis was reinstated in Rome in the first century A.D. The great double temple of Isis and Serapis near the Campus Martius in Rome became an important religious center. The cult of Isis grew and reached its peak in the Roman Empire during the second century A.D. Worship of the goddess spread throughout the Roman world, reaching as far north as Britain and as far east as Asia.

The growth of a new faith, Christianity, led to a steady decline in the popularity of Isis. In the mid-sixth century, Emperor Justinian closed her temple at Philae in southern Egypt and expelled her priests, extinguishing the official flame of Isis that had burned steadily in Egypt for 2,000 years.

JAIME ALVAR IS PROFESSOR OF ANCIENT HISTORY AT THE CARLOS III UNIVERSITY, MADRID, SPAIN.

Learn more

Egyptian Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Goddesses, and Traditions of Ancient Egypt
Geraldine Pinch
Oxford University Press, 2004

Mystery Cults of the Ancient World
Hugh Bowden
Princeton University Press, 2010

MULTITASKER

A painting from Pompeii shows Isis with the attributes of various divinities. In her left hand she holds the horn of plenty, a symbol of Demeter, Greek goddess of agriculture. In her right hand she holds a rudder, symbol of the Roman goddess Fortuna. National Archaeological Museum, Naples.

PRISMA/ALBUM

MANY-FACED GODDESS

Isis was revered throughout the ancient world as a protector and maternal force. Cultures across the Greco-Roman world reshaped her appearance—her hair, dress, and attributes—to suit their local preferences and divine associations.

ISIS AND APHRODITE

The features of this statue of Isis date it to A.D. 150. Her nudity links her with Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and childbirth. She wears the *calathos*, a headdress often worn by Greco-Egyptian divinities, emblazoned with a solar disk and horns. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART/RMN-GRAND PALAIS

ISIS AND CERES

In one hand, this marble statue from the second century A.D. carries a jug, and in the other are sheaves of grain, associated with Ceres, Roman goddess of the harvest. This figure is also associated with Fortuna, the Roman goddess of luck. National Archaeological Museum, Naples

PRISMA/ALBUM

ISIS AND PERSEPHONE

This first-century B.C. statue from Crete depicts Isis as Persephone, queen of the underworld in Greek myth. The crescent moon on her forehead and the sistrum, a rattle linked to Isis worship, blend traits of the two goddesses. Heraklion Museum, Crete

SCALA, FLORENCE

TRADE AND WAR
Merchant ships, such as that on the left of this sixth-century B.C. Greek bowl, were targets of pirates in antiquity. Naval warships, such as the one on the right, were periodically deployed to quash piracy. British Museum, London

BRITISH MUSEUM/RMN-GRAND PALAIS

MEDITERRANEAN MARAUDERS

PIRATES OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

Trade routes along the shores of the Mediterranean brought wealth and prosperity to civilizations there—and made them attractive targets for pirates stalking the seas. A bane to the pharaohs of Egypt, Alexander the Great, and even Julius Caesar, pirates targeted trade routes, sacked cities, and enslaved captives, all in the name of profit.

MARK WOOLMER

SALTWATER SKIRMISH

A second-century A.D. Roman relief of a sea battle (left) was produced when Rome's naval supremacy had reduced piracy. National Archaeological Museum, Venice

DEA/SCALA, FLORENCE

RAMMED

On the bottom of the Mediterranean, maritime archaeologists have found remnants of third-century B.C. bronze rams (below) from Roman warships.

RPM NAUTICAL FOUNDATION

Every child knows what a pirate looks like: a swashbuckler with an eye patch and a parrot perching on his shoulder. This perception of pirates and piracy, which still deeply influences modern culture, was shaped by authors writing in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

These highly fanciful notions were inspired by the privateers and buccaneers of the "golden age" of piracy, which lasted roughly between 1650 and 1730. But pirates and piracy are much older than this era, and maritime banditry has been around for nearly as long as seafaring itself.

The origins of the modern term "piracy" can be traced back to the ancient Greek word *peiráomai,* meaning attempt (i.e., "attempt to steal"). Gradually this term morphed into a similar sounding term in Greek meaning "brigand," and from that to the Latin term *pirata*.

Ancient pirates left no archaeological records. The historical evidence for what they did, why they did it, and the attempts that were made to quell them is obtained entirely from written sources. These help build a picture of the threat that pirates presented and reveal that the practice was prevalent throughout antiquity.

RULING THE WAVES

14TH CENTURY B.C.

The Amarna Letters, a series of correspondences between Egypt and its allies, address the problem of piracy. The king of Crete gives assurances he will punish marauders.

12TH CENTURY B.C.

Ramses III crushes the Sea Peoples, the mysterious seaborne migrants whose marauding sows chaos in the Mediterranean.

6TH CENTURY B.C.

Greek trade spans the Mediterranean. Greek cities act to protect their economy by eradicating maritime brigands.

167 B.C.

The fall of Rhodes and its once powerful navy leads to a resurgence of piracy, which targets the growing wealth of Rome.

75 B.C.

Julius Caesar is briefly captured by pirates. In the next decade, Pompey will declare all-out war on piracy.

A.D. 14

Emperor Augustus dies. Nearly all the Mediterranean is under Roman control, and piracy wanes.

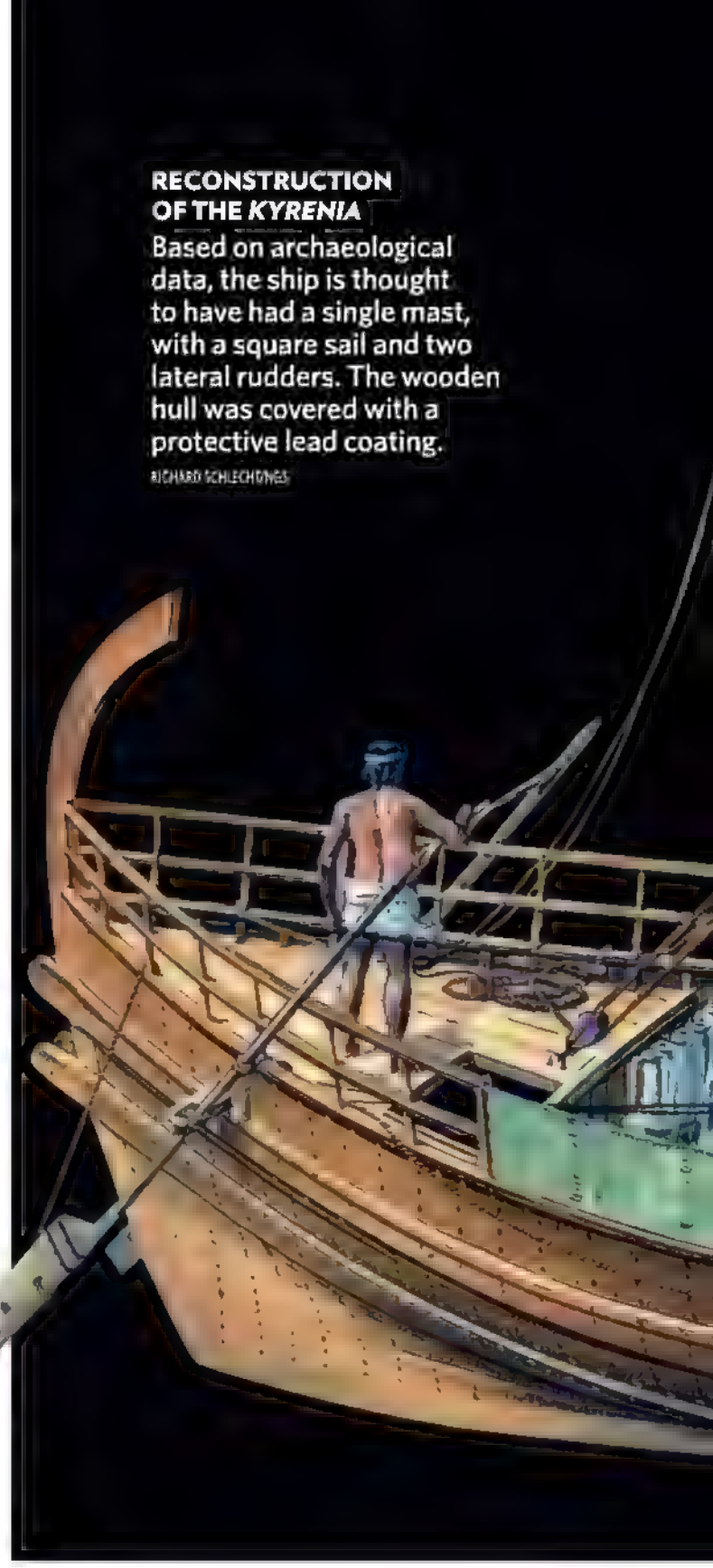
LETTERS OF STATE
In the 14th century B.C., Egypt and its allies detailed frustrations with two confederacies of pirates in the Amarna Letters, a cache of more than 300 clay tablets (above). Louvre Museum, Paris
DEA/A.BUM

Land and Sea

Piracy in the ancient world can be linked, in part, to geography. The ruggedness of the Mediterranean region often favored maritime rather than agricultural livelihoods. During the Bronze and Early Iron Ages, occupants of coastal settlements such as Byblos, Sidon, and Tyre in Lebanon, and Athens, Aegina, and Corinth in Greece, relied on marine resources such as fish, mollusks, seaweed, and salt for their survival. Most people living in such places would have owned a boat and possessed both seafaring skills and an unsurpassed knowledge of local navigation and sailing conditions. If times were particularly hard, these skills could be easily used in piracy.

Models and images of sailing vessels found in Greece, Egypt, and the Levant reveal that by 3000 B.C., a wide assortment of craft were regularly sailing the Mediterranean. During the early millennia of seafaring, when maritime navigation was in its infancy, ships were unable to cross long distances over open water and so kept close to the coast. Shipping was therefore restricted to a few navigable routes, such as the one that connected Egypt with the island of Crete.

Merchant vessels laden with goods moved along these shoreline thoroughfares. The rugged coastlines of the Mediterranean were another advantage to pirates. Numerous hidden inlets allowed their ships to remain hidden from view until it was too late to escape. Merchant ships lacked speed and dexterity, and pirates were quicker and nimbler.



RECONSTRUCTION OF THE *KYRENIA*
Based on archaeological data, the ship is thought to have had a single mast, with a square sail and two lateral rudders. The wooden hull was covered with a protective lead coating.
RICHARD SCHLECHTWEG

Pirates in Egypt

Some of the earliest written accounts of piracy come from Egypt. One of the first is an inscription from the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotep III (1390–1353 B.C.) that describes having to establish defenses in the Nile Delta against maritime raiders. These raiders were perhaps the first true pirates, as they attacked anyone of any nationality and owed their allegiance to no one.

More ancient accounts come from the Amarna Letters, a series of diplomatic correspondences between the Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten and allied and vassal states, Written on clay tablets between 1360 and 1332 B.C., they touch on many concerns, including piracy. The tablets record that two groups of pirates, the Lukka and Sherden, were causing substantial disruption to regional commerce and security. Correspondence between the king of Alashiya (modern Cyprus) and the Egyptian pharaoh reveals just how

When times were hard in seaside towns, the laden merchant vessels that passed along the coast became tempting targets.

WINE AMPHORA RECOVERED FROM A SECOND-CENTURY B.C. SHIP WRECKED OFF FRANCE. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK
ALBUM

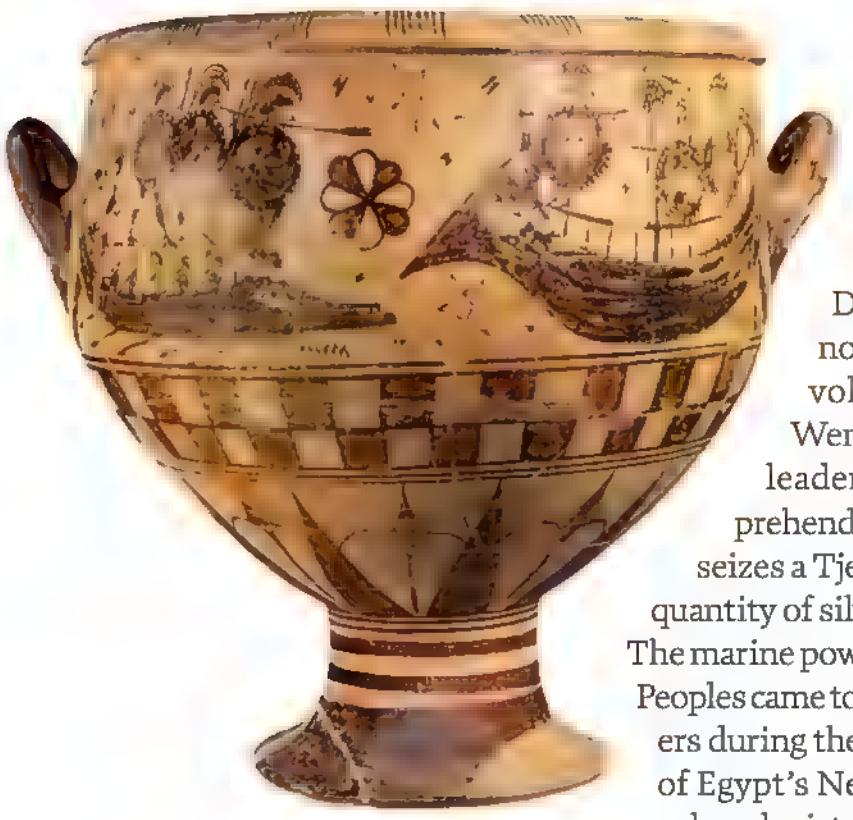
much of a threat the Lukka (based in modern-day Turkey) posed. Having vigorously denied that the people of Alashiya had allied themselves with the pirates, the king then claims to have introduced countermeasures, and states he would punish any of his subjects involved in piracy.

The Sea Peoples

Another important Egyptian text sheds light on a feared and mysterious group of marine marauders: the Sea Peoples. In *The Tale of Wenamun*, a work of fiction written around 1000 B.C., the Tjeker (a subset of the Sea Peoples) controlled the coastline between southern Israel and Byblos (central Lebanon) and attacked merchant shipping with impunity. The titular Wenamun turns to piracy in a desperate effort to replace

THE WRECK OF THE *KYRENIA*

IN 1965 THE WRECKAGE of an ancient, small, single-masted merchant boat was discovered on the bottom of the sea off the coast of Cyprus. Archaeologists Michael and Susan Womer Katzev dubbed the wreck *Kyrenia*, after a nearby Cypriot port. Radiocarbon dating reveals the boat was constructed between 325 and 315 B.C.—around the time of the death of Alexander the Great—and sank between 295 and 285 B.C. When it sank, the ship was carrying a shipment of amphorae of wine from Rhodes, millstones, and almonds. The 46-foot-long, lead-plated hull bore signs of violence. Evidence that some of the cargo is missing has led archaeologists to suspect that the *Kyrenia* was captured, plundered, and then sunk by pirates.



UNWELCOME ENCOUNTER

Made in western Greece in the seventh century B.C., the Aristonothos krater (above) depicts a naval confrontation between a Greek ship on the left and an Etruscan ship on the right. Capitoline Museums, Rome

DE AGOSTINI

the money that had been stolen by one of his crew. Despite the Tjeker not being directly involved in the crime, Wenamun blames their leader for failing to apprehend the criminal and so seizes a Tjeker ship and takes a quantity of silver.

The marine power known as the Sea Peoples came to overshadow all others during the final two centuries of Egypt's New Kingdom. Many archaeologists believe they were a loose confederacy who thrived in the Mediterranean around the 13th and 12th centuries B.C. Vivid accounts of Egypt's battles against them are found in the mortuary temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu. Inscriptions on the walls dramatize how the pharaoh lured them into a carefully laid trap: "The countries which came from the isles in the midst of the sea, they advanced to Egypt . . . The net was made ready for them. Entering stealthily into the harbormouth, they fell into it. Caught in their places, they were dispatched, and their bodies stripped."

The identity and nationality of the Sea Peoples remains one the biggest questions in the history of the ancient Mediterranean. The term "Sea Peoples" does not appear in ancient texts (a 19th-century Egyptologist coined the name). Most of the sources describing their actions come from ancient Egypt, and none gives a specific geographic point of origin for them.

While the Sea Peoples' actions may appear like pure piracy, their exact nature and intentions are still debated. At different times they may have been immigrants or entrepreneurs, instead of strictly pirates. Historians continue to explore this mysterious maritime power to understand their true place in the history of the Mediterranean.

Epic Pirates of Greece

Attitudes to piracy in ancient Greece are reflected in the Homeric epics, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, composed around 750 B.C. Although pirates are often spoken of with disapproval in these works, on a few occasions their actions and activities are not only condoned but praised.

The historian Thucydides later wrote of the different motives for coastal dwellers to practice piracy, "some to serve their own cupidity and some to support the needy." Like Homer, Thucydides suggests that marauders could be held in esteem: "They would fall upon a town unprotected by walls and would plunder it; indeed, this came to be the main source of their livelihood, no disgrace being yet attached to such an achievement, but even some glory."

By the end of the sixth century B.C., Greek trade spanned the length and breadth of the Mediterranean. The marked increase in the volume and value of goods being traded meant that, for the first time, large coastal cities such as Athens, Corinth, and Aegina were almost wholly dependent on maritime trade. With piracy now posing a significant threat to their commercial interests, these cities introduced a number of measures to fight it.

According to Thucydides, the Corinthians were the first to use their navy to suppress piracy. The huge expense and impracticality of large-scale naval campaigns, however, would have precluded many other states from these kinds of efforts. Consequently, throughout the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., the Greek states tried to curtail piracy using less expensive measures, including sporadic campaigns designed to "clear the seas of pirates"; the creation of alliances and pacts with specific language outlawing maritime banditry; the construction of naval outposts in regions popular with pirates; and the use of naval escorts to protect merchant shipping.

These measures proved fruitless in stopping the pirates. In the fourth century B.C., Alexander the Great believed attacks on his merchant shipping would threaten his planned invasion of Persia. He created the first truly international coalition against piracy to which his allies were expected to contribute. But following his death in 323 B.C., no power was strong or affluent enough to suppress piracy. In fact, Alexander's successors found that pirates could be turned to their advantage, either to directly menace their enemies, or by being incorporated into their own navies as auxiliary units.

Demetrius I of Macedon regularly employed pirates among his naval forces. The first-century B.C. historian Diodoros Siculus records that the

PUNISHMENT FOR PLUNDERERS

Standing tall, a vengeful Ramses III (left) smites Sea People captives in a 12th-century B.C. relief at Medinet Habu, Egypt. The Sea Peoples, a confederation of tribes whose origins remain undetermined, rampaged across the eastern Mediterranean in the 13th and 12th centuries B.C.

AKG/ALBUM/FRANÇOIS GUÉNET

USEFUL PIRATES

A silver tetradrachm (above) was minted in the early third century B.C., during the reign of Demetrius I of Macedon who employed pirates in his naval assaults. British Museum, London

BRITISH MUSEUM/SCALA, FLORENCE

spectacular array of vessels Demetrius deployed when blockading Rhodes included a number of pirates, the sight of which "brought great fear and panic to those who were watching."

Pirates of Rome

During the fourth and third centuries B.C., Etruscan pirates posed a major threat to the merchants of Greece. They presented a particular menace to the island of Rhodes whose thriving economy was heavily dependent on the Adriatic shipping routes between Greece and Italy. Rhodes therefore deployed its large, well-equipped navy to protect trading ships.

With the collapse of Rhodian naval power in 167 B.C., however, a strong check on piracy was removed. By the latter half of the second century B.C., it had once again become a considerable threat to Mediterranean shipping with the rise of the notorious Cilician pirates from the coastal region of modern-day Turkey. Cilicia's fearsome marauders targeted grain ships. Crews were captured and enslaved. Important or rich passengers were held hostage for ransom.

As Rome's agricultural and mining industries depended on a plentiful supply of cheap slaves, the Romans were initially willing to tolerate the Cilicians, but their tolerance came to an end in 75 B.C. when a group of Cilician pirates kidnapped a young Julius Caesar, and held him on the island of Farmakonisi. The first- and second-century historian Plutarch describes Caesar's blasé reaction to his 38-day captivity:

> He joined in their games, read aloud his speeches to them, and laughingly threatened to kill them all.
>
> "The pirates were delighted at this," Plutarch wrote, "and attributed his boldness of speech to a certain simplicity and boyish mirth." As it turned out, they had fatally underestimated their captive. Once ransomed, he hunted down and imprisoned them. A little later, "he took the pirates out of prison and crucified the lot of them, just as he had often told them he would do when he was on the island and they imagined that he was joking."

The sack of Rome's port town, Ostia, at the hands of pirates in 67 B.C. finally persuaded the Romans to undertake a more concerted and systematic effort to tackle piracy. A new law granted the Roman general Pompey the Great unprecedented authority and finances for combating

In 75 B.C. a group of Cilician pirates captured the young Julius Caesar, holding him for 38 days on an island.

HERMES, ONE OF THE DIVINITIES WORSHIPPED BY CILICIAN PIRATES. DETAIL FROM A FIFTH-CENTURY B.C. KILIX. LOUVRE MUSEUM, PARIS

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

this scourge of trade.

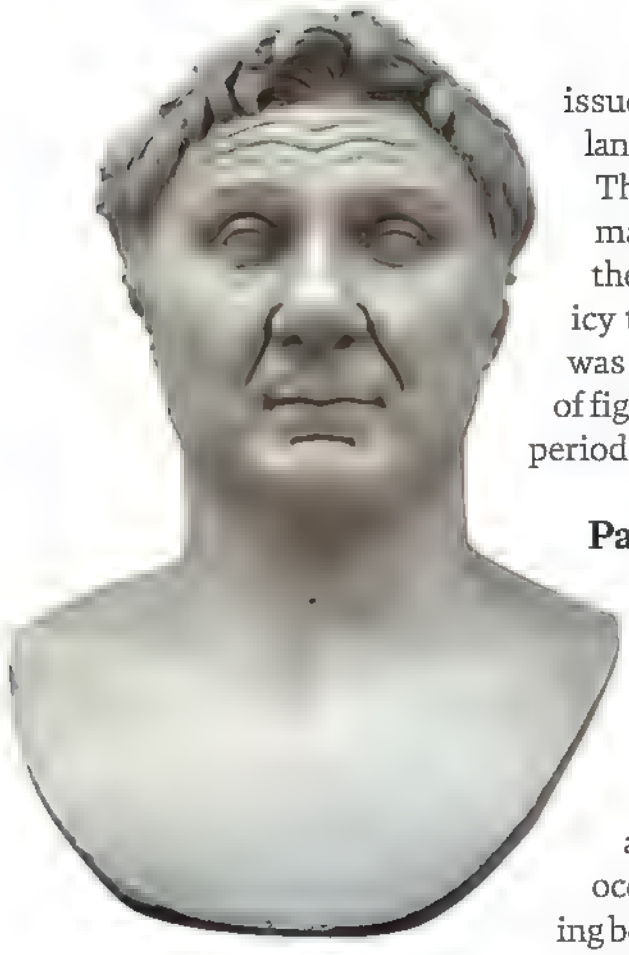
In his *Life of Pompey,* the historian Plutarch paints a vivid picture of the scale of the challenge facing the general:

> *Their flutes and stringed instruments and drinking bouts along every coast, their seizures of persons in high command, and their ransoming of captured cities, were a disgrace to the Roman supremacy. For, you see, the ships of the pirates numbered more than a thousand, and the cities captured by them four hundred.*

Accordingly, Pompey undertook a series of raids against the main pirate strongholds in the Mediterranean. Although thousands died at the hands of Pompey's troops, those that surrendered were

THREATS TO ROMAN TRADE

AROUND 75 B.C. Cilician pirates were a formidable threat to the trade routes of Rome. These pirates operated from the southern coast of Anatolia (modern Turkey) where Cilicia's rugged coastline offered excellent harbors and hiding places. Protecting the trade routes that crisscrossed the sea became a priority to Rome, which began dedicating more resources to combat the scourge of piracy and bring more of the Mediterranean coastline under its aegis. Following Pompey's war on piracy, Cilicia became a Roman province in 67 B.C., Syria followed in 64 B.C., and Judaea and Egypt fell increasingly under Roman control. As Roman political and economic power grew more ubiquitous around the Mediterranean, large-scale piracy decreased.



PIRATE HUNTER
Roman general Pompey (above in a first-century B.C. bust) launched a campaign against piracy in 67 B.C., which made the Mediterranean much safer for trade. Museum of Roman Civilization, Rome

PRISMA/ALBUM

issued pardons and given property and land in regions located far from the sea. These rewards enabled the recipient to make an honest living and diminished the attractions of piracy. Pompey's policy to blend pressure with persuasion was to be the most successful method of fighting piracy for much of the Roman period.

Pax Romana

By the death of Augustus in A.D. 14, virtually the whole Mediterranean coastline was under direct Roman control. This Pax Romana, the peace resulting from Rome's dominance, curtailed the activities of pirates. As traditional occupations such as farming and trading became more profitable, the risks and hardships of a life at sea became distinctly less attractive. The political and economic unity of the Roman Empire also encouraged greater cooperation when it came to eradicating piracy.

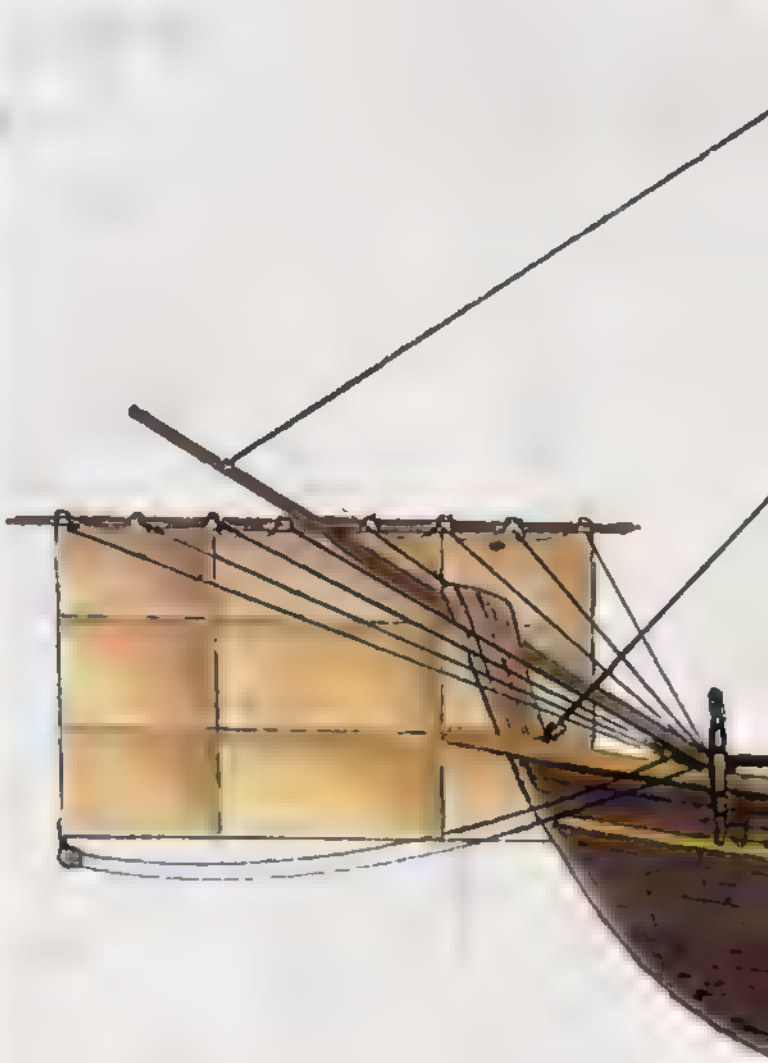
Nevertheless, like those before them, the Romans were never able to completely eradicate the practice. The occasional outbreak of piracy was typically suppressed by large-scale naval operations. These campaigns were aimed at locating and destroying the pirates' anchorages and fleets. One such operation occurred during the reign of Tiberius in the first century A.D. An honorific inscription commissioned by the citizens of Ilion (in modern-day Turkey) offers thanks to the Roman general Titus Valerius Proculus for "destroying the pirate groups in the Hellespont and for guarding the city in all ways without burdening it."

Although the Roman Empire had all but eradicated piracy at the height of its power, as its political and economic influence waned during late antiquity, the practice once again began to flourish in the Mediterranean. Even the powerful fleet of Byzantium did little to prevent piracy from becoming a great scourge to the region, and marauders once again terrorized the shipping lanes until the emergence of the formidable Arab and European navies in the early Medieval period.

MARK WOOLMER IS HONORARY RESEARCH FELLOW AT THE DEPARTMENT OF ANCIENT HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM, ENGLAND.

UNLOADING WHEAT FROM A MERCHANT SHIP IN OSTIA, THIS RELIEF FROM THE FIRST TO SECOND CENTURY A.D. SHOWS ROMAN OFFICIALS (*TABULARII*) RECORDING THE DETAILS OF GOODS AND PAYMENTS. MUSEUM OF ROMAN CIVILIZATION, ROME

DEA/A. BUM

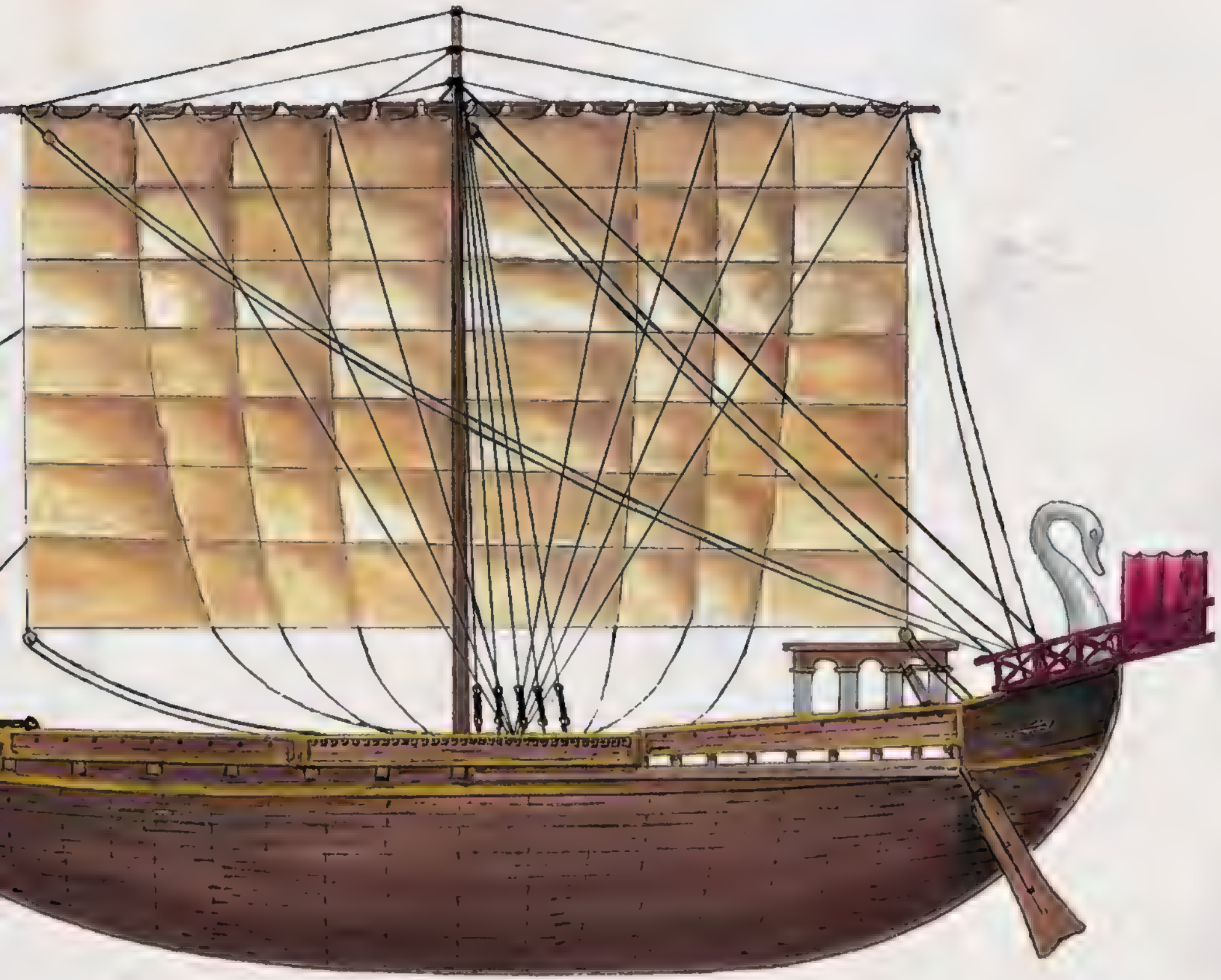


RIPE FOR THE TAKING

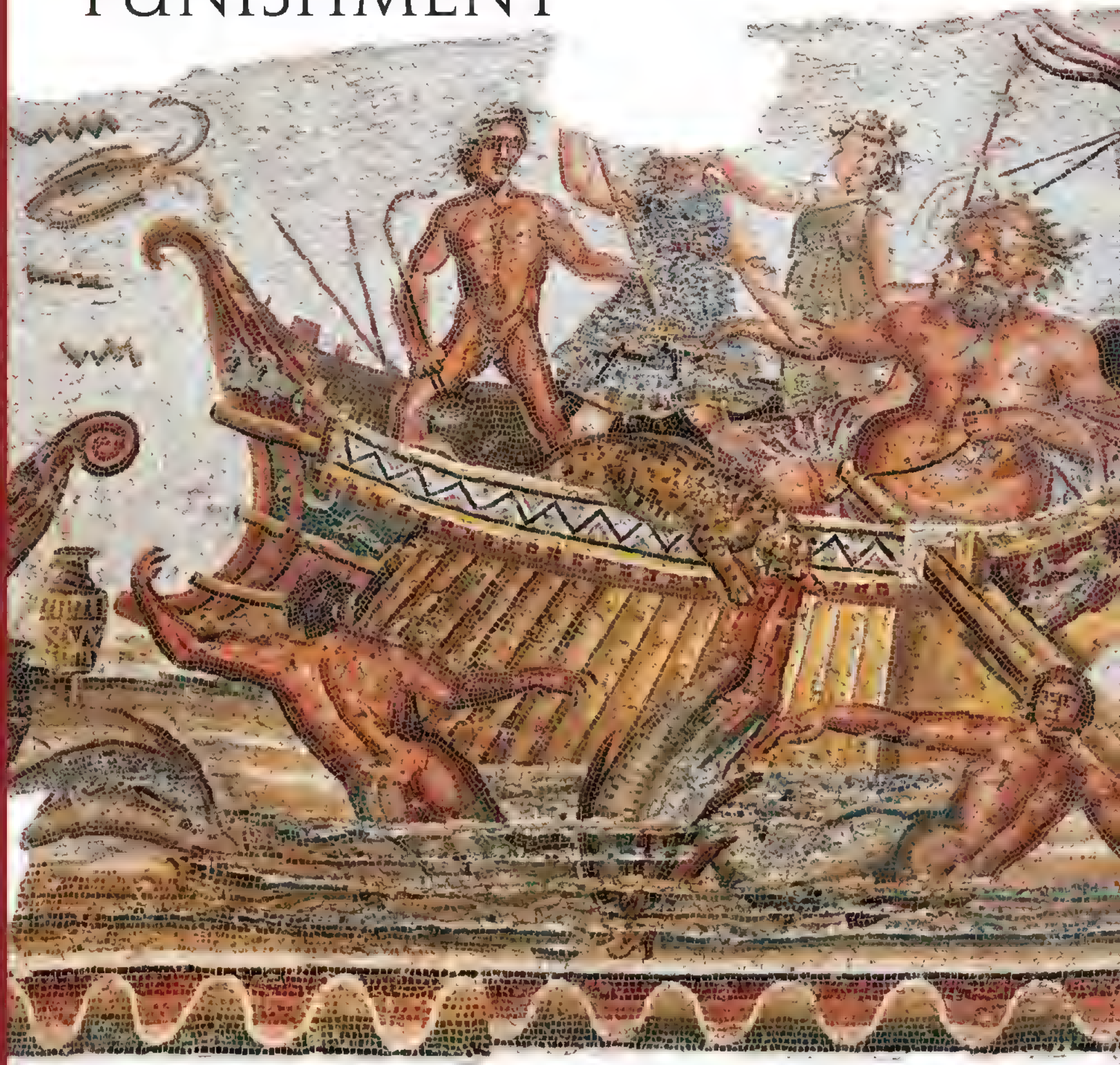
THE MERCHANT SHIP known as the *navis oneraria* was Rome's cargo vessel of choice in late antiquity, designed to carry huge loads. An impressive example of a navis oneraria was discovered in the Mediterranean off Madrague de Giens in southeast France. Dating to the first century B.C., it could hold 400 tons and was much larger than most other types of navis oneraria. On the ship's final voyage it was carrying 7,000 to 10,000 amphorae of southern Italian wine to Gaul. On excavation, archaeologists saw evidence that divers had plundered some of the cargo after it sank. Although it is not known if pirates had attacked this ship, the slow-moving progress of this class of vessel made it the perfect target for brigands.

A RECONSTRUCTION (BELOW) OF A TYPICAL IMPERIAL ROMAN-ERA *NAVIS ONERARIA*

DBO DESIGN-DAVID BOCQUELET



CRIME AND DIVINE PUNISHMENT



ARTISTS EMBRACED PIRACY in their works, as in this third-century A.D. Roman mosaic. Uncovered in the House of Dionysus and Ulysses at Thugga (in modern Tunisia), it depicts, Dionysus, god of wine, aboard a pirate ship. Adapted from a tale that appears in the *Homeric Hymns* (a series of poems from the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.) and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (A.D. 8), the god is kidnapped by pirates who believed him to be a mortal

A ROMAN MOSAIC FROM THE HOUSE OF DIONYSUS AND ULYSSES AT THUGGA (MODERN-DAY DOUGGA, TUNISIA) THIRD CENTURY A.D. BARDO NATIONAL MUSEUM, TUNISIA

PAUL WILLIAMS/ALAMY/ACI

prince. When they try to tie Dionysus up, the ropes fall away. The helmsman warns that he must be a god, but the pirates take no notice. Suddenly, a vine springs from the top of the mast, and Dionysus turns into a lion. The terrified pirates jump into the sea and are turned into dolphins. In the mosaic, the figure of Dionysus is on the left (the head has been lost), and extends an arm toward his portly mentor, Silenus, who has his hand on the tiller.

THE FIFTH GREAT KHAN

Kublai Khan's portrait was painted after his death in 1294 and hangs in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan. Opposite: A Mongol warrior helmet was taken as a trophy during one of Kublai Khan's two failed invasions of Japan.

PORTRAIT AND HELMET: BRIDGEMAN/AC

KUBLAI KHAN'S REALM

Grandson of the feared Genghis Khan, Kublai completed the Mongol conquest of China, founded the Yuan dynasty, and ruled history's largest contiguous empire.

VERONICA WALKER

The Last Great Khan

1215
Kublai Khan is born, the son of a Christian princess. His father, Tolui, is the fourth son of the Mongol Empire's leader, Genghis Khan.

1251
Möngke, Kublai's brother, becomes the great khan. While focusing on western expansion, he entrusts rule of northern China to Kublai.

1260
Following Möngke's death in 1259, Kublai proclaims himself the great khan. He must defeat another brother, Arigböge, for the title.

1271
Intensifying the war to unite the whole of China under his rule, Kublai styles himself as the head of a new Chinese dynasty, the Yuan.

1279
The Song dynasty of southern China falls to Kublai. His rule takes on a distinctly Chinese flavor, creating tensions with Mongol nobles.

1281
Kublai undertakes a second, failed attempt to invade Japan. Despite other lackluster military ventures, the empire is prosperous.

1294
Kublai dies at 79, succeeded by his grandson. The empire will decline from the 1330s, and the Yuan dynasty will be toppled by the Ming in 1368.

CHINESE VASE MADE IN THE LATE YUAN PERIOD (CIRCA 1350). PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART
BRIDGEMAN/ACI

KUBLAI'S CAPITAL

Kublai made his capital city in Dadu, now called Beijing. The restored red Drum Tower (above) stands on the same site as Kublai's original structure, built in 1272.

DUKA/GETTY IMAGES

When the fourth Mongol great khan, Möngke, died in 1259, his brother, Kublai, never doubted who was his rightful successor. While Möngke had been expanding Mongol rule into Syria in the far west, Kublai had proved to be a brilliant general, conquering a swath of what is now southwestern China as well as modern-day Vietnam. He had proved his mettle, but there were others who sought to rule.

News reached Kublai that another of his brothers, Arigböge, also wanted to proclaim himself emperor. Kublai, then age 45, hastily made his way to his residence at Shangdu (later immortalized as Xanadu in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's famous poem "Kubla Khan") to decide what to do next.

Kublai knew that whoever succeeded Möngke would need formidable diplomatic as well as military skills to hold together a colossal patchwork of lands that stretched from northern China through Persia to Russia. To face down the threat from Arigböge he chose an impressive

ritual that would give him unshakable legitimacy. After consulting his advisers, Kublai decided to cement his claim by casting the I Ching, an ancient Chinese system of divination with links to both Confucianism and Taoism. The solemn rite revealed that Kublai would achieve sublime success if he persevered along the correct path.

Kublai's decision to choose a Chinese tradition rather than a Mongol one is a potent reminder of what would become a lifelong dilemma. Kublai was driven by the unrealized dream of his grandfather, the fearsome conqueror Genghis Khan, who desired to unite the whole of China under Mongol rule. Kublai knew that subduing China was one thing, but ruling it would be another. It would require a delicate balancing act of appealing to his new Chinese subjects while maintaining the Mongol loyalty.

The I Ching ritual and its choreographed blend of piety and politics paid dividends: Kublai took power as Kublai Khan, defeated Arigböge four years later, and became the sole ruler of the world's largest contiguous land empire, stretching from the Pacific Ocean to the Black Sea.

Raising a Khan

In 1206 Genghis Khan united the tribes of the Mongol steppe and set their warlike sights far beyond their homeland. When Genghis died in 1227, they had all but conquered the Jin dynasty of northern China, and swaths of Central Asia.

Khan means "ruler," and was often written as *khagan*—the great khan. On Genghis's death, his son, Ögödei, became the second khagan, whose own son, Güyük, became the third. In 1251 the succession passed to Möngke, son of Genghis's son Tolui.

Kublai, Möngke's brother, was born in 1215. Their mother was Sorghaghtani, a member of an eastern Christian denomination. As Tolui's wife, she orchestrated dynastic politics with supreme skill, ensuring that Möngke succeeded as the fourth khagan in 1251. She also played a crucial role in shaping Kublai.

Sorghaghtani ensured Kublai was taught Mongol traditions. She encouraged toleration of

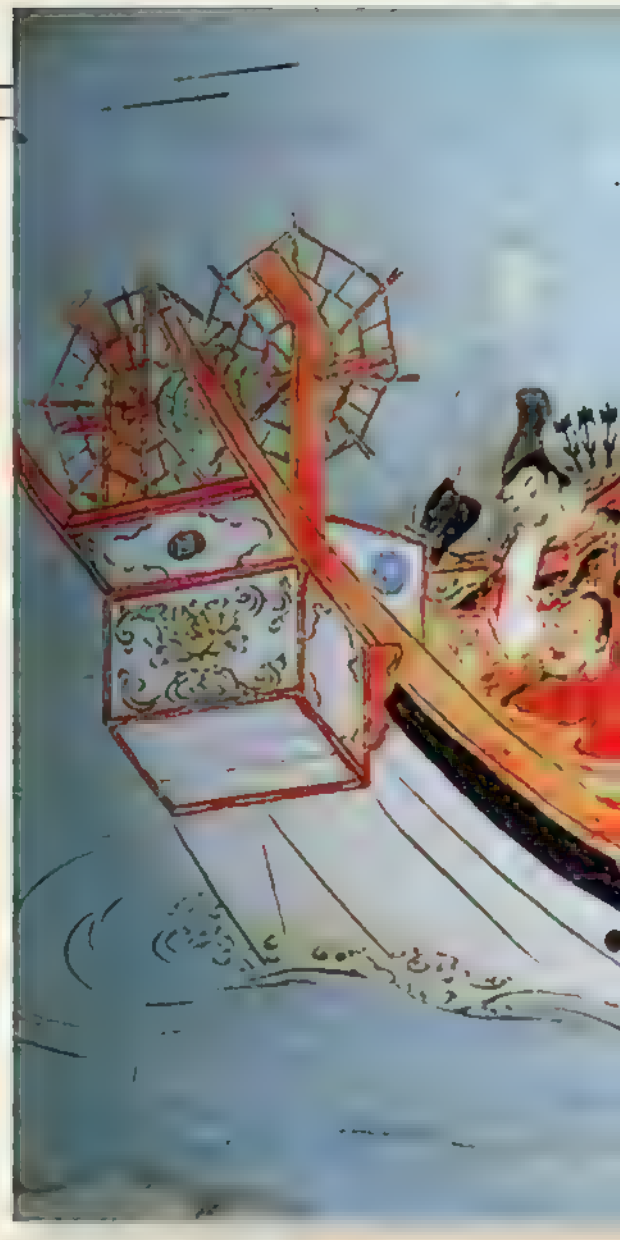
THE FIRST GREAT KHAN

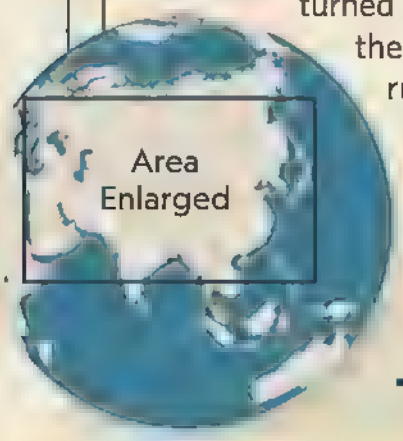
A statue of Kublai's grandfather Genghis Khan (below) is on display in Ulaanbaatar, capital of Mongolia. Genghis created the Mongol Empire and began the conquest of China.

BRIDGEMAN/AC

VICTORIES AND DEFEATS

KUBLAI KHAN used military expertise to grow his empire—even before he took complete control of it. His elder brother Möngke held power in 1256 when Kublai was first given responsibility for China. As part of his loyal service to his brother, Kublai brought the Dali Kingdom (modern-day Yunnan Province in southern China) under Mongol control after several years of campaigning. After becoming the fifth great khan in 1260, Kublai turned his attention to bringing the rest of China under his rule. With each victory, the Mongols were able to capture more and more Chinese territory and resources—including the soldiers and the ships that would become the foundation of the Mongol navy. Most of China had been conquered by 1276, but final victory would not be achieved for three more years. Under Kublai's reign, the sprawling Mongol Empire was organized into four distinct territories or khanates: the Golden Horde, the Ilkhanate, the Chagatai Khanate, and the Yuan dynasty in China. Later expeditions against powers in Japan, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Java were not as successful as Kublai's earlier Chinese campaigns. Kublai tried multiple times to invade Japan and failed to make Java a vassal state, but he did conquer territory in both Vietnam and Myanmar.





THE MONGOL EMPIRE IN 1294

Territory under Mongol control
Borders of the khanates
Vassal states
Capital
Current borders

MAP: EOSG S.COM

① *Dali Kingdom*

Before succeeding him, Kublai served his brother, Möngke Khan, as the civil and military ruler of Mongol-held China. In 1256 Kublai toppled the Dali Kingdom in southwestern China, paving the way for future attacks on the Song.

③ *Japan*

Two Mongol invasions launched in 1274 and 1281 both failed as typhoons devastated Kublai Khan's fleets. The Japanese word *kamikaze* (meaning "divine wind") was derived for the 1281 storm to recognize the gods' intervention.

⑤ *Java*

The Singhasari kingdom of Java, refused to pay tribute to Kublai Khan. The Mongols launched an invasion of the island in 1293 with more than a thousand ships, but their massive numbers did not result in victory.

② *Southern China*

Following Kublai's accession as khan, the long war to conquer the Southern Song culminated in the Mongol victory at the 1279 Battle of Yamen. Chinese expertise in training the Mongol navy was a key to the triumph.

④ *Vietnam*

Kublai's first invasion of Dai Viet (Vietnam) was undertaken under Möngke Khan in 1258, using Yi soldiers from Vietnam and Thailand. The invasions of 1285-87 (when Kublai was great khan) employed Chinese troops.

⑥ *Myanmar*

The Empire of Pagan (in modern Myanmar) also refused to pay tribute to Kublai Khan. The Battle of Ngasaunggyan in 1277 dealt the empire a devastating defeat, essentially ending 250 years of Pagan rule in the area.

▲ **JAPANESE WARRIORS** DEFEAT THE MONGOLS AT SEA IN THIS DETAIL FROM THE "MOKO SHURAI EKOTOBA," A SCROLL DEPICTING THE MONGOL INVASIONS, PAINTED 1275-1293. MUSEUM OF THE IMPERIAL COLLECTIONS, TOKYO.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

◀ **KUBLAI'S TROOPS** CROSS A FLOATING BRIDGE TO LAY SIEGE TO THE SOUTHERN SONG FORTRESS O-CHOU. THIS 16TH-CENTURY ILLUSTRATION WAS CREATED IN THE MOGUL COURT OF AKBAR THE GREAT, LAHORE. GOLESTAN IMPERIAL LIBRARY, TEHRAN

WERNER FORMAN/GTRES

PATRON OF THE ARTS

ARTIST LIU GUANDAO, also known by the name Zhongxian, was a prominent painter known for his technical skill and realistic depictions of traditional Chinese subjects. His portrait of Kublai Khan's son earned him a position at court, where he went on to create many other works for the great khan. Among them is a piece now in the collection of the National Palace Museum in Taipei, Taiwan. Painted on yellow silk, the work shows Kublai Khan (dressed in a white coat over a red robe) and his empress with a hunting party. The attendants' different skin tones and ethnic features indicate that the khan's companions came from outside China. Along for the hunt are a hawk, a cheetah, a white falcon, and a dog to assist the archer in bringing down their prey.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

TRUSTED ADVISERS

Compared to other cultures, Mongol women during the time of Kublai Khan enjoyed higher social status within their society. They enjoyed more rights, including the ability to own and inherit property. Historians attribute their position to the Mongols' nomadic origins. When warriors were away on horseback, women organized and ran the camps. From commoners to nobility, women were encouraged and expected to be capable administrators. Kublai's mother, Sorghaghtani, raised her sons to value education and the lessons of other cultures. Kublai's wife, Chabi, was no different. A woman of intelligence, independence, and open-mindedness, her traits complemented Kublai's priorities as a leader, and the two became a power couple. Chabi's ability to navigate Chinese and Mongol culture helped her husband to do the same.

other faiths, including Islam, and employed Chinese tutors so that Kublai could learn the local traditions and the foundations of Buddhism and Taoism. This multicultural education later helped him understand the importance of tolerating a conquered region's traditions and faiths.

As a warrior, Kublai showed himself a grandson of Genghis Khan. When Möngke became khagan in 1251, Kublai participated in his brother's territorial expansion, a process driven by the tried-and-tested Mongol methods of extreme brutality.

Tensions and Triumph

Following his proclamation as khagan in 1260, Kublai had to deal decisively with Arigböge's claim to the throne before he could return to campaigning. Internal tensions were becoming as much of a threat as external enemies. Despite the solemnity and power attached to the title of khagan, Kublai's accession marked the beginning of the splintering of the Mongol lands into subkhanates: the Golden Horde on the Volga, the Chagatai Khanate in Central Asia, the Ilkhanate based in Iran, and the Chinese territories ruled by Kublai himself.

After Arigböge's defeat in 1264, Kublai resumed his military campaigns against the Song dynasty in southern China three years later. Ruling a populous territory of around 50 million inhabitants, the Southern Song had developed an innovative culture that carried out the first experiments in movable type long before printing techniques reached Europe. A flourishing economy boosted the growth of its cities, some of whose populations peaked at more than one million people. To Kublai, the lands of the Song seemed ripe for the taking.

The Song had already resisted Mongol aggression for many years. They had skilled military commanders, gunpowder, and excellent military hardware, including siege engines. When Kublai resumed hostilities, it was clear that the endgame was looming.

BLENDING CULTURES

Artistic styles from all over Asia began to combine under the Yuan. A jade belt buckle (below) from the period features floral motifs typical of Central Asia and a Chinese dragon. Shanghai Museum

DANITA DEL.MONT/AGE FOTOSTOCK

ARTISTIC RETREAT

When Kublai Khan conquered China's Song Dynasty, many loyalists withdrew from public life to focus on art. One of them was Qian Xuan, whose works mix the realism of the Song period with subjects from the Tang dynasty (618-907), considered a golden age of Chinese art. In this painting Minghuang (an eighth-century emperor) observes from his horse as servants help concubine Yang Guifei mount hers. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

BRIDGEMAN/AC

The war was long and grueling. Knowing Kublai's strength lay in the fast Mongol cavalry attacks over open ground, the Song exploited his weaknesses by withdrawing into heavily fortified positions. Long, protracted sieges unfolded. Kublai began a campaign of coastal assaults to cut off the enemy's supply routes. It was a risky tactic for a commander rooted in the culture of the steppes.

By 1273 Mongol perseverance led to the fall of the fortified city of Xiangyang. Little by little the rich Southern Song realms began to fall apart politically. In 1279 the Southern Song finally fell to Kublai Khan, and for the first time in several centuries China was united.

New Beginnings

As Kublai Khan captured more and more of the Song lands, he declared his reign to be a new dynasty for China. In 1271 Kublai established himself as emperor of the Yuan, meaning "Great Origin." Drawing on his education and his current advisers, Kublai knew it was even more important to embrace Chinese culture. He adopted Chinese dress and customs, incorporated Chinese methods of governing and management, and assembled a team of local advisers to help him administer the country.

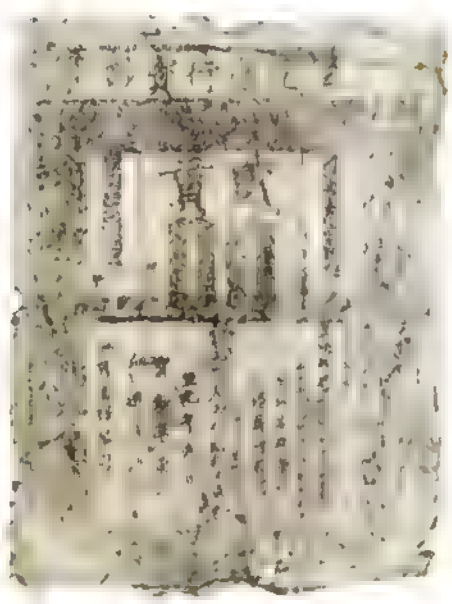
One of the most important of these was Liu Bingzhong. At the beginning of Kublai's reign, Liu had persuaded the khagan to transfer the Mongol capital from Karakorum to Shangdu, anticipating the increasingly Chinese flavor of Kublai's rule. Constructed for both government and business, its lavish facilities deeply impressed the Venetian traveler Marco Polo when he met Kublai.

By the time of Polo's visit, in the mid-1270s, Shangdu was already being relegated to the role of summer palace. To center the empire more in Chinese territory, the capital shifted southeast to Dadu (today the site of Beijing), also on the advice of Liu. Marco Polo became famous for having served in the court of Kublai, an event that demonstrates the khagan's openness to foreign customs. Whether marked by notable military fail-

CASH MONEY

China's use of paper currency (below, from 1297) was introduced around A.D. 800. Kublai Khan preserved the system and authorized the conversion of Song paper money into Yuan currency.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI



RETURN OF THE HAN
The image shows the corner tower of Beijing's Forbidden City, built by the Ming dynasty. Toppling the Mongol Yuan in 1368, the Ming, who were ethnically Han Chinese, represented a return to native Chinese rule.

MELODIOUS VISION/GETTY IMAGES

THE GREAT KHAN IN HIS CAPITAL, FROM THE EARLY 15TH-CENTURY *LIVRE DES MERVEILLES DU MONDE*. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

"IN XANADU DID KUBLA KHAN . . ."

SHANGDU (anglicized as Xanadu in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's famous 1816 poem "Kubla Khan") became Kublai's summer capital in 1274. Little remains of its splendor today; dark brick walls still stand, but the magnificent palace with marble and gold-plated rooms described by Marco Polo is gone. After the Yuan dynasty fell in 1368, the city lingered but was most likely abandoned by 1430. Today the site is designated a UNESCO World Heritage site.

ures—such as his attempted invasions of Japan in 1274 and 1281, or successes such as the conquest of Vietnam and Burma—Kublai's later reign relied heavily on non-Mongol military personnel and on foreign advisers.

Even so, the Yuan hierarchy was rigid: Mongols occupied the top of the heap, followed by Central Asians and then the Chinese. Despite Kublai's reliance on some Chinese as close advisers, Chinese nobles resented how they were shut out of the top positions in the Yuan government, and how the Yuan abolition of the civil service exams essentially cut off the chance of employment and social ascent for the brightest and best in Chinese society. Mongols, meanwhile, resented the increasingly China-centered nature of Kublai's imperial power structure.

Kublai had already chosen his grandson Temür as his successor when he died at age 79, in 1294. He said that his body—the location of which is now lost—should rest alongside that of his grandfather Genghis in Burkhan Khaldun, a mountain in northeastern Mongolia. In spite of the years he lived in China, Kublai's heart always belonged to the Mongol steppe.

The conquest of China, where he forged the Yuan dynasty, would stand as his greatest achievement. Yet he could not have done so without adopting Chinese customs, thus alienating Mongol aristocrats who regarded the Chinese as inferior. This tension between the Mongol elite and its subject peoples—especially the Chinese—played a major role in destabilizing Mongol rule. Although at his death Kublai would leave an empire that was relatively stable and prosperous, it would survive him by less than a century.

SPECIALIZING IN ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE HISTORY OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, **VERONICA WALKER** IS A POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI, FINLAND.

Learn more

BOOKS

Kublai Khan: The Mongol King Who Remade China
John Man
Bantam, 2006

The Troubled Empire: China in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties
Timothy Brook
Belknap Press, 2010

THE SOCIAL LADDER

Kublai was personally open to other cultures, but the Yuan social hierarchy was rigid: The Mongols were at the top, followed by the *semuren* (from Central Asia and Europe), *hanren* (northern Chinese and Koreans), and *nanren* (southern Chinese) at the bottom.

A HUNTING PARTY OF TEMÜR KHAN, KUBLAI'S SUCCESSOR. PAINTING ON SILK, AROUND 1300

BILDARCHIV/AGE FOTOSTOCK

① *Mongols*

In the Yuan dynasty, the Mongols controlled the central government. To assist them in administration, they appointed former nomads and Muslims from Central Asia, the Middle East, and even Europeans to positions of power. Chinese civil servants could hold offices at lower levels, but deep-seated distrust barred them from rising through the ranks.

② *Muslims*

Persian Muslims collaborated with Kublai, such as Moiz al-Din, who proposed the creation of the Persian Academy (Huihui Guozixue), to educate interpreters. The astronomer Jamal al-Din developed a new calendar for Kublai in 1267, and provided the Mongol state with astronomical instruments such as an astrolabe and an armillary sphere.

◀ **A PERSIAN** ASTROLABE FROM THE 13TH CENTURY, OF THE KIND PRESENTED TO KUBLAI. HE HISTORY OF SCIENCE MUSEUM, OXFORD, ENGLAND

AKG/ALBUM

③ *Tibetans*

Although Kublai was careful to respect Chinese traditions, he had a strong preference for Tibetan Buddhism and appointed several lamas, Buddhist priests of Tibet, to direct religious affairs in China. Locals resisted their influence and accused them of arrogance and corruption. Resentment grew strong among Chinese Buddhists during the Yuan dynasty, and many monks participated in the revolts that would overthrow it in 1368.

④ *Westerners*

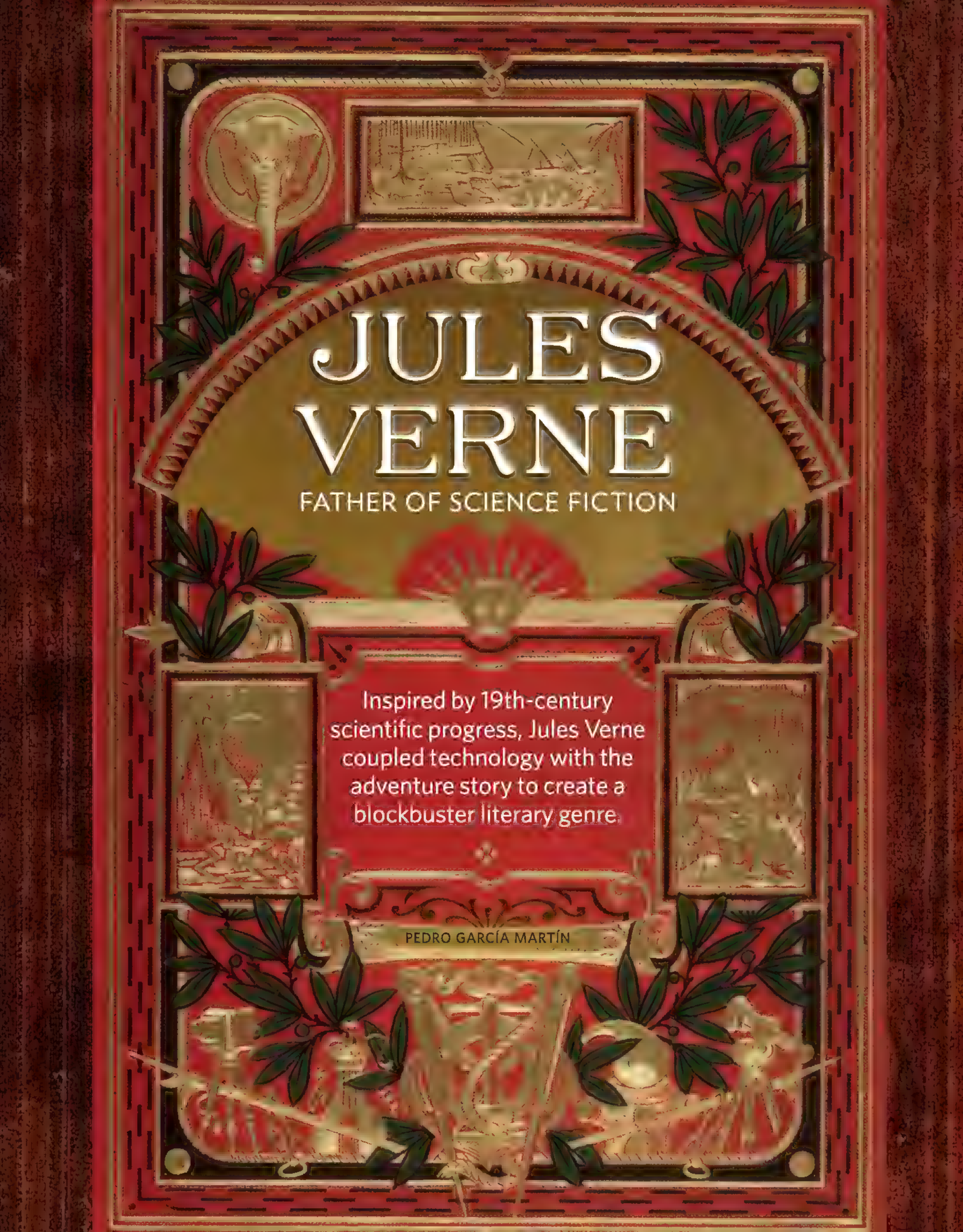
Europeans arrived in the Mongol Empire, such as the Venetian traders Niccolò and Maffeo Polo, the missionary Giovanni da Pian del Carpini, and the French ambassador William of Rubrouck. Europeans gained influence at the Mongol court; the trader Marco Polo (son of Niccolò) was sent by Kublai on many missions throughout Asia and may have even served as a tax collector.

▼ **THE POLO BROTHERS** OFFER A BIBLE AND CRUCIFIX TO KUBLA. KHAN. 15TH-CENTURY MINIATURE.
BRIDGEMAN/ACI

◄ **A BODHISATTVA.** BUDDHISTS BELIEVE IS A PERSON ON THE PATH TO BECOMING A BUDDHA. BRONZE BODHISATTVA, YUAN DYNASTY. ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, OXFORD, ENGLAND
BRIDGEMAN/ACI

SCIENCE MEETS FICTION
Photographed in 1880, Jules Verne was one of the first authors to combine adventure with science. Opposite: The 1865 editions of Verne's Extraordinary Journeys series of titles featured iconic images of technology and exotic places.

PORTRAIT AND COVER: AKG/ALBUM


JULES
VERNE
FATHER OF SCIENCE FICTION
Inspired by 19th-century scientific progress, Jules Verne coupled technology with the adventure story to create a blockbuster literary genre.
PEDRO GARCÍA MARTÍN

"The human mind," observes the narrator of *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea,* "is naturally drawn to grandiose notions." And notions do not come much more grandiose than those dreamed up by that narrator's creator, considered the father of science fiction. From the center of the Earth to the surface of the moon, Jules Verne described environments where no one had been, but that everyone wanted to see.

Despite not being much of a traveler himself, Verne unleashed the adventurousness and versatility of his own imagination to describe some of the greatest expeditions in literature across an astonishing output of 60 novels.

He reached the peak of his career in 1872, when an avid readership awaited the next plot twist in his novel *Around the World in 80 Days.* First published in installments, it recounted how Phileas Fogg and his assistant Passepartout risked all to win their 80-day wager against impossible odds.

Verne was, however, much more than a prolific creator of blockbusters. He was a child of the industrial revolution, whose tales fascinated his readers by speculating on where technology would take humanity next, and asking if machines will change humanity for better or worse.

Finding the Formula

Jules Verne was born in 1828 in the river port of Nantes, in western France. His parents—Catholic, conservative, middle class—provided him with a happy childhood. The Atlantic coast and the mighty Loire River of his hometown shaped his childhood, and he learned to sail and love boats. With a decent education behind him and then a spell in Paris to study law, it was assumed he would bury himself in the family legal practice for the rest of his days.

Instead, he began to construct a network among the city's literary set. He was also in the French capital to witness the revolution of 1848, a brief, ultimately unsuccessful struggle for radical improvements to better labor and democratic rights that swept Europe. A 1971 essay by historian Jean Chesneaux suggests that these events had a deep impression on Verne, and that the adventures of which he later wrote were, in part, a symbol of political freedom to the author. Chesneaux also saw revolutionary traits in Verne's later creation, the reclusive Captain Nemo of *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea.*

Having told his parents he would not be pursuing a legal career, his life as a writer got off to a somewhat rocky start. Over the next few years he wrote a series of plays, only four of which were performed, with little success.

He also got married. His bride was a widow

TALES OF THE FUTURE

1828
Jules Verne is born on February 8, in Nantes, a bustling port city on the Loire River in western France, the son of a lawyer.

1847
He moves to Paris to study law. There, he witnesses the revolution of 1848, meets literary figures, and decides to become a writer.

VICTORIA, THE HOT-AIR BALLOON FEATURED IN THE FIRST EDITION OF VERNE'S 1863 NOVEL, *FIVE WEEKS IN A BALLOON,* HIS FIRST LITERARY HIT

ALBUM/AKG IMAGES

REVOLUTIONARY INSPIRATION?

Eugène Hagnauer's painting shows a bloody episode in Paris during the brief revolution of 1848. Despite Verne's later political and social conservatism, his biographers consider that the events had a deep effect on the future pioneer of science fiction.
Musée de la Ville de Paris, Musée Carnavalet

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

1863

Five Weeks in a Balloon is Verne's first hit. With P.-J. Hetzel as his publisher, in 1869-1870 Verne will publish *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*.

1870s

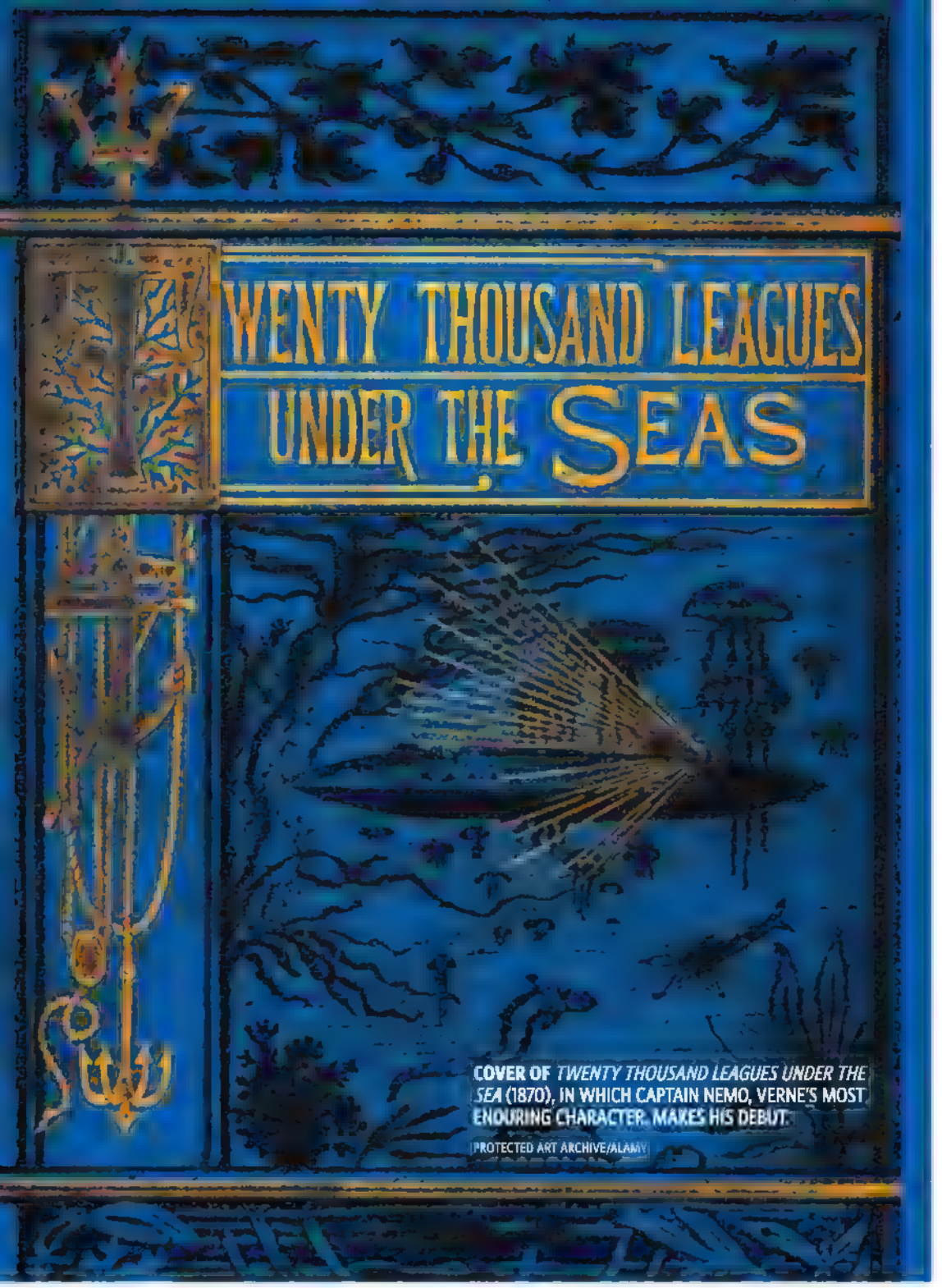
Verne's readers are taken to the moon, Africa, and the Arctic with *Around the Moon*, *Dick Sand*, and *Michael Strogoff*.

1880s

The Green Ray blends science with romance. *The Purchase of the North Pole* recounts a bid to stop the Earth tilting on its axis.

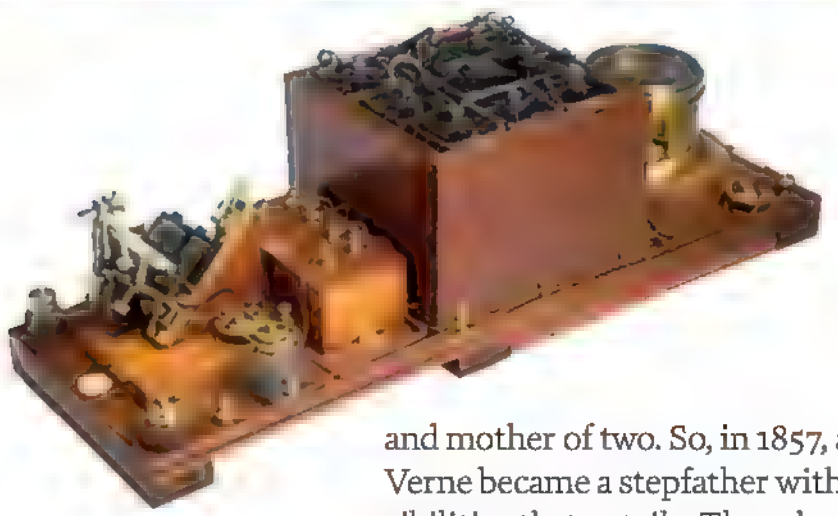
1905

Jules Verne dies, age 77. His 54-novel Extraordinary Journeys series will deeply inspire the new medium of film.



COVER OF *TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA* (1870), IN WHICH CAPTAIN NEMO, VERNE'S MOST ENDURING CHARACTER, MAKES HIS DEBUT.

PROTECTED ART ARCHIVE/ALAMY



LONG DISTANCE
Phileas Fogg, the hero of *Around the World in 80 Days*, could not have completed his travels without the the electric telegraph (above), which first appeared in 1844.

BRIDGEMAN/AC

and mother of two. So, in 1857, at the age of 29, Verne became a stepfather with all the responsibilities that entails. These he met by taking a job as a stockbroker, rising at dawn to work on his unsuccessful plays, and then setting off for the office. In 1861 his son, Michel, was born, the only child that the couple would have together.

Life by his early 30s seemed far removed from the literary world he yearned for. But rescue came in the form of the flamboyant figure of Gaspard-Félix Tournachon, universally known by his pseudonym, Nadar. Tartly described by his biographer Adam Begley as "a narcissist, but a charming one," Nadar was a writer, impresario, and photographer. He was also, perhaps, one of the first men to truly understand the power of nascent celebrity culture, and had a great eye for the possibilities of new technology, especially photography. He was responsible for one of the most famous portraits of Jules Verne, with the author smiling good-humoredly into the lens.

Up, Up, and Away

In 1858 Nadar had a characteristically audacious idea. He would fly over Paris in a balloon, taking his camera with him. There, high above the streets, he would take the world's first aerial photograph of the city.

Verne later confirmed that this blend of technology and adventure inspired him to finally leave playwriting behind and write a novel. Set in Africa, *Five Weeks in a Balloon* (1863) was about a team of Englishmen, and their bid to cross Africa in a hydrogen-filled balloon. Thanks to Nadar, he had hit upon the formula that would kick-start his career and inaugurate a new genre of storytelling: the scientific romance. Or, as it later came to be known, science fiction.

The novel's mixture of exotic locations and technical detail was new and would prove immensely popular with readers. Verne was not the first writer to use the landscapes and wildlife of Africa as a backdrop for adventure, but no one before had combined that fantasy with so many concrete details from the technological progress of his day.

Yet what most of his readers did not know was that, when it came to adventure, Verne was almost as inexperienced as they were. Over the course of his life he did make some modest excursions beyond France's borders, but in that great age of exploration he never went to the more distant parts of the world. All his knowledge of Africa and beyond came from secondary sources. Endlessly curious about how the world of technology worked, he did not feel the need to research the natural world himself.

Verne's foray into novel-writing coincided with a golden age in serialized fiction. The first advertisements had appeared in newspapers in 1836, enabling publishers to drop the cost for readers. Circulation rocketed and created a market of readers thirsty for entertainment. The expansion of publishing created a circular, self-feeding system of information. It brought

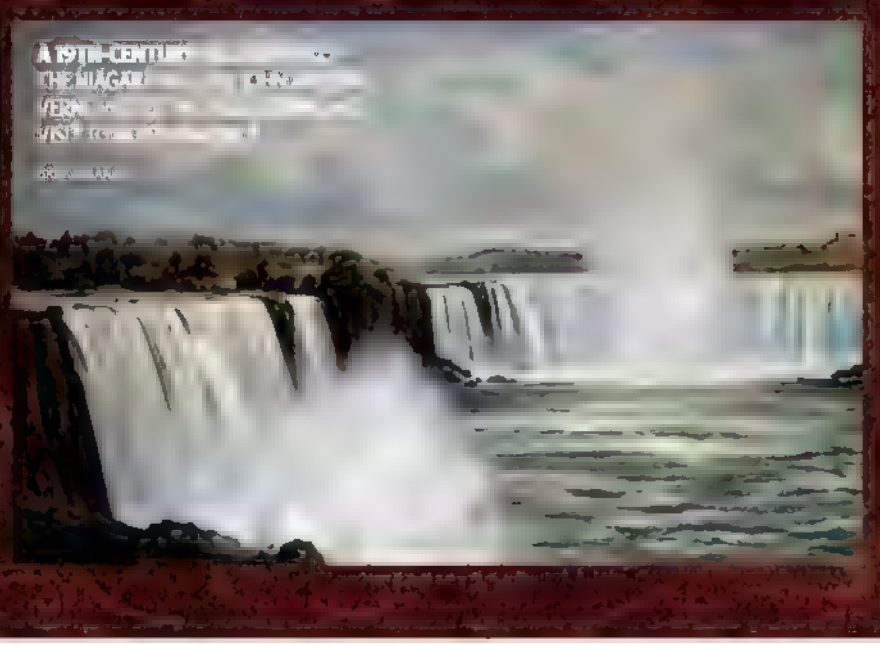
TAKING OFF

Nadar, pictured here in the gondola of a hot-air balloon in his studio, inspired Verne's first literary hit, *Five Weeks in a Balloon*. Despite the iconic nature of the craft, both men believed the future lay in the possibility of heavier-than-air flight.

ATELIER DE NADAR. RMN-GRAND PALAIS

A Modest Traveler

JULES VERNE lived in just three places: Nantes, where he was born; Paris, where he studied; and Amiens, where he lived and wrote until his death. He undertook some journeys around Europe, and once visited North America. His love of boats also took him across the Mediterranean, where he visited North Africa. However, his journeys were relatively modest, and he had no personal experience of the far-flung locations he wrote about. His books were researched using the information he gleaned from the press. Like the scientific, engineering, and astronomical detail that went in to his work, the geographical color that brought his tales alive was mainly secondhand.



to an amateur scientist such as Verne all the information he would ever need for his work, which he could then repackage as blockbuster fiction.

Publishing Partners

But Verne could not do it all on his own, and the man who had a definitive impact on his career was someone who understood the burgeoning new market for violence, adventure, romance, and sensation. This was Pierre-Jules Hetzel, the publisher of other great French writers such as Honoré de Balzac and Émile Zola. He had taken on *Five Weeks in a Balloon* and, following the success of that venture, would go on to be Verne's main publisher and close friend.

THE COVER OF *OFF ON A COMET* (1877), WHICH RECOUNTS HOW A COMET MAKES A LOW PASS OVER EARTH, SCOOPING UP A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO MUST SURVIVE ON ITS SURFACE

.EEMAGE/PR.SMA

He offered Verne 20,000 francs for two novels each year. Although this was a vastly larger sum than the writer had ever received before, the contract tied Verne to his publisher for 20 years. It was a mutually beneficial arrangement, though it is a close call as to which of the two men benefited most financially. The two men became friends, but Hetzel also became the author's most astute critic.

Another novel that Verne had written, *Paris in the Twentieth Century,* was set a hundred years in the future, in a dystopian 1960 France where technology represented the only measure of worth. Hetzel disapproved of the work, believing the pessimism of the book would worry and alienate Verne's new audience. He persuaded Verne not to publish it. The book would remain shelved until the very 20th century that it purported to describe.

Despite the differences in literary vision between the two men, Hetzel's commercial formula began to reap huge commercial rewards for both. Exploiting the huge growth in journals that published fiction in serialized form, starting in 1864 Verne's tales started to come out in a joint Verne-Hetzel venture, the *Magasin d'éducation et de récréation.*

Around the same time, Hetzel hit on another shrewd marketing ploy: Following serialization, Verne's tales would then appear in a permanent book format, grouped under the title *Voyages extraordinaires,* or the Extraordinary Journeys.

Hetzel proclaimed that the aim of the collection was "to summarize all knowledge of geography, geology, physics and astronomy that modern science has amassed and to retell the history of the universe in the attractive and picturesque form." The claim was somewhat overblown, but the brand he created has been powerful and enduring: Using a cartonnage technique and bound in a richly decorated, fabric-lined cardboard cover, the books were gorgeous objects in themselves. Hetzel invested heavily in the cover design and produced objects whose craftsmanship and beauty still resonate (and are often imitated) today.

Verne soon had an income that allowed him to move out of Paris. He settled in Amiens, a cathedral town in northern France, quiet enough to facilitate the imagination (and fulfill Hetzel's punishing publishing schedule) but still within easy reach of the big city. Provincial life suited him. He could write each morning, leaving plenty of time in the afternoons for other activities.

PIERRE-JULES HETZEL PHOTOGRAPHED BY NADAR IN 1865, SOON AFTER HE EMBARKED ON HIS HIGHLY (AND MUTUALLY) LUCRATIVE PUBLISHING VENTURE WITH VERNE

ADOC-PHOTOS/ALBUM

A Thin Editorial Line

PIERRE-JULES HETZEL was Verne's publisher for over 20 years, following the author's first success with *Five Weeks in a Balloon* in 1863. Hetzel was the brainchild behind the Extraordinary Journeys series of stories, which made Verne's name and both of their fortune[illegible] when Hetzel died in 1886, Verne's stellar career was undisp[illegible] A veteran of the 1848 revolution and the short-lived republic that fol[illegible] Hetzel was a man of progressive views and an atheist. Even so, he exercised strict control over Verne's works, doing all he could to veto overtly political or religious content, which Hetzel felt might alienate the mass audience that he wanted to cultivate. Despite some forays into pessimism and social criticism, Verne largely respected Hetzel's business instinct. The question of whether Hetzel improved or damaged the artistic merit of the novels is a vexed one. Perhaps, without Hetzel, Verne's tales would have broached contentious issues—slavery, for example, or the loss of religious faith—more often. On the other hand, a character such as Captain Nemo seems to live outside current affairs, and is a product of the pure, storytelling spirit that Hetzel knew Verne's readers adored.

A PAGE OF A MANUSCRIPT OF *AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS* SHOWING CORRECTIONS TO THE FIRST VERSION, ADDED BY VERNE, IN THE RIGHT-HAND COLUMN

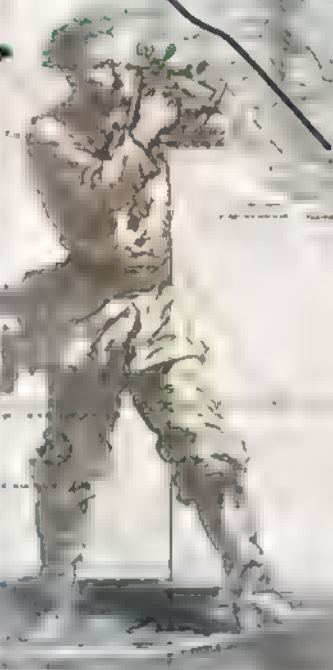
BNF

AROUND THE WORLD IN 54 NOVELS

Beginning in the 1860s, Verne published a series of novels collectively known as the Extraordinary Journeys, which would contain an astonishing 54 works by the end of Verne's career. Appearing first in installments, then in book form, the stories whisked away readers on breathtaking tours packed with wonder and peril—from the frigid Arctic wastes to the dense African jungle, to the Pacific Ocean.

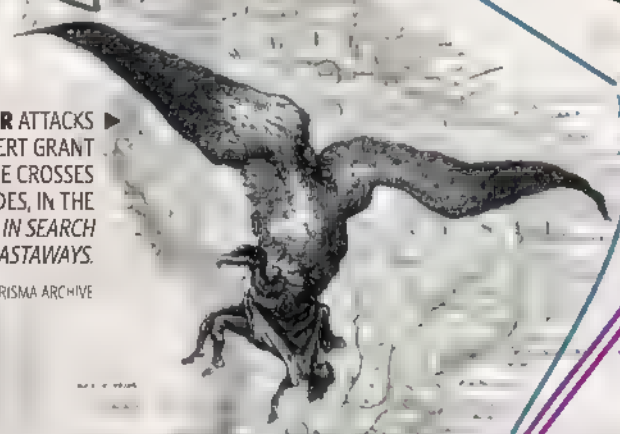
▲ **PRINCESS AOUDA** IS SAVED FROM BEING BURNED ALIVE WITH THE BODY OF HER HUSBAND IN *AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS.*

BRIDGEMAN/ACI



CAPTAIN NEMO ▶ CALCULATES HIS EXACT POSITION BEFORE SETTING OUT IN THE *NAUTILUS* SUBMARINE FROM NEAR JAPAN, IN *TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA.*

LEEMAGE/PRISMA ARCHIVE



A CONDOR ATTACKS ▶ ROBERT GRANT AS HE CROSSES THE ANDES, IN THE NOVEL *IN SEARCH OF THE CASTAWAYS.*

LEEMAGE/PRISMA ARCHIVE

THE *MACQUARIE* SAILING BOAT IS STRUCK BY A PACIFIC STORM IN THE NOVEL *IN SEARCH OF THE CASTAWAYS.*

LEEMAGE/PRISMA ARCHIVE

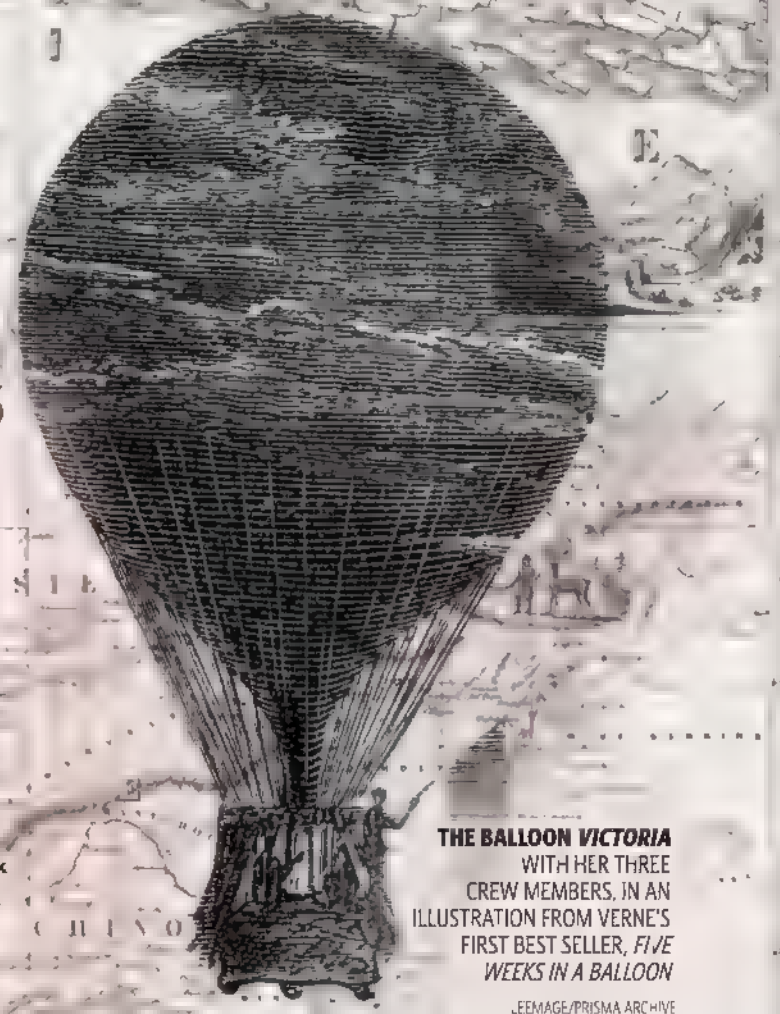
Liverpool
Glasgow
New York
San Francisco
Fort Kearney
Vigo Bay
Timbuktoo
Guinea Cascades
Talcahuano
Tristan de Acunha

(2) *In Search of the Castaways (1867)*

"[The Pampas] may be divided into three parts. The first extends from the Andes, and stretches over 250 miles covered with stunted trees; the second 450 miles is clothed with magnificent herbage, and stops about 180 miles from Buenos Aires; from this point to the sea, the foot of the traveler treads over immense prairies."

DETAIL FROM THE BOOK COVER *MICHAEL STROGOFF· THE COURIER OF THE CZAR,* PUBLISHED BY HETZEL, ILLUSTRATED BY JULES FÉRAT

BRIDGEMAN/ACI



THE BALLOON *VICTORIA* WITH HER THREE CREW MEMBERS, IN AN ILLUSTRATION FROM VERNE'S FIRST BEST SELLER, *FIVE WEEKS IN A BALLOON*

.EEMAGE/PRISMA ARCHIVE

5 *Michael Strogoff: Courier of the Czar (1876)*

"These winters of Asiatic Russia may be said to be precocious, considering that during them the thermometer falls until the mercury is frozen nearly 42 degrees below zero."

4 *Around the World in 80 Days (1872)*

Passepartout's offer to the Indian "was an alluring one, for, supposing it took the elephant 15 hours to reach Allahabad, his owner would receive six hundred pounds."

3 *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea (1869)*

"Captain Nemo placed himself under a dark gallery. The light from our lamps produced sometimes magical effects, following the rough outlines of the natural arches and pendants disposed like lustres that were tipped with points of fire."

1 *Five Weeks in a Balloon (1863)*

"Starting from the soil, delicate jets of water scattered in all directions, crossing and recrossing each other, mingling, contending in the swiftness of their progress, and all rushing toward that nascent stream which became a river. 'Here is, indeed, the Nile!' reiterated the doctor, with a tone of conviction."

6 *Dick Sand: A Captain at Fifteen (1878)*

"Eight days after the departure from the Coanza, twenty had fallen by the way, at the mercy of the beasts that prowled behind the convoy. Lions, panthers and leopards waited for the victims which could not fail them, and each evening after sunset their roaring sounded at such a short distance that one might fear a direct attack."

ILLUSTRATION FROM THE COVER OF *DICK SAND: A CAPTAIN AT FIFTEEN,* WITH DICK, THE TITULAR YOUNG CAPTAIN, IN THE CENTER

.EEMAGE/PRISMA ARCHIVE

MAP: EOSGIS.COM/VG MAPS. BACKGROUND: ALAMY/AC

The Darker Side

VERNE'S NOVELS OFTEN portray science as a straightforward benefit to mankind, a wondrous tool in the hands of his characters. But across his astonishingly prolific output, Verne sometimes sounds a more nuanced, skeptical note. A good example of when the idea of progress brings out his pessimistic streak is *The Begum's Fortune* (1879), in which two scientists, one French and the other German, each found a city in the United States. The Teutonic city is a sinister, militaristic place, dedicated to the production of the materials of war. Thirty-five years before the outbreak of World War I, Verne wrote about the use of poison gas and bombardment from the air. The reason why this dark vision of technology—so different from the optimistic tone of much his other work— did not play a larger part in his books is usually attributed to the caution of his publisher Hetzel, who was careful not to alienate Verne's mass audience.

FIRST BRITISH EDITION (1880) OF *THE BEGUM'S FORTUNE*
SAMPSON LOW

THE TERROR
Verne sounded an ominous note for the future of technology with the flying machine *Terror,* brainchild of the evil inventor Robur in the 1904 *Master of the World* (below).
LEEMAGE/PRISMA ARCHIVE

Submarines and Steamboats

The masterpieces followed fast and furious. Verne would write a total of 54 novels under the Extraordinary Journeys brand, and while many are little known today, some became all-time classics. An early hit was *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864). A German uncle and nephew team decipher an old runic map that shows a passage to the Earth's core via an Icelandic volcano. In the depths of the planet, they discover many marvels, including live dinosaurs and a forest of giant mushrooms.

The narrative is highly fanciful, yet at the same time it reflects actual discoveries in paleontology, and the emerging geological consensus that the Earth is much older than had previously been thought.

Work on *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* began in 1867. The book would introduce readers to Verne's most accomplished creation, the enigmatic and austere Captain Nemo. Fiercely intelligent and technologically adept (his name is Latin for "nobody"), Nemo has rejected human society and company and decided to live out his life in the ocean in his submarine, the *Nautilus.*

This astonishing vessel was far beyond the capacity of contemporary science, and the way it produced electricity—distilling it from seawater—is never explained in the novel. Yet, at its publication in 1870, when the first submersible boats had already appeared, it was not beyond all possibility that such a process could one day be developed.

Unlike many writers that came after him, Verne's creations never contradicted the laws of nature. They were tantalizingly out of reach, but a denizen of the late 19th century could not say for certain that their lifetime would not witness such a marvel.

Around the World in 80 Days followed in serialized form in 1872. The story of a Londoner, Phileas Fogg, who makes a wager he can circumnavigate the globe in 80 days, the plot is less speculative than other Verne titles, concentrating on the possibilities (and flaws) of emerging means of transport, such as railroads and trains. As Fogg and his obliging factotum, Passepartout, make their dash across the globe, Verne masterfully ratcheted up the tension by introducing plot twists in each installment to stall or delay their progress.

Throughout their partnership, Hetzel exercised a high degree of editorial control over Verne's works, and it is an interesting question as to how different his novels would have been (and how successful) if the author had been left more to his own devices.

After abandoning his 1863 dystopian novel about Paris, Verne had largely followed Hetzel's strictures, cranking up the adventure while toning down the political and social commentary.

Different Directions

Hetzel died in 1886, and his son took over the business, which included the task of managing their top money-spinning author. Yet even before the death of his publisher, it is possible to distinguish Verne loosening the constraints on his writing by the early 1880s. A more wistful, romantic tone began to appear in *The Green Ray*

AMERICANS IN PARADISE?
American artist N. C. Wyeth illustrated a 1918 edition of Verne's *The Mysterious Island*. In this novel, set during the American Civil War, five Union soldiers use a hot-air balloon to escape from a camp. Stranded on a strange island, they use an albatross to take a message to the outside world.

LEBRECHT AUTHORS/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

Under the Sea

CAPTAIN NEMO, portrayed by actor James Mason, looks in horror at the giant squid in the 1954 film *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. Nemo's adventures aboard the *Nautilus* inspired not only dramatic adaptations but also real-life deep-sea explorers, like Robert Ballard, discoverer of the *Titanic*. In an interview with National Geographic, Ballard described himself as "this kid from Kansas who reads *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* and wants to be Captain Nemo." It's no coincidence that his state-of-the-art research vessel is also named the *Nautilus*.

LU WORTIG/AGE FOTOSTOCK

Towering Achievement

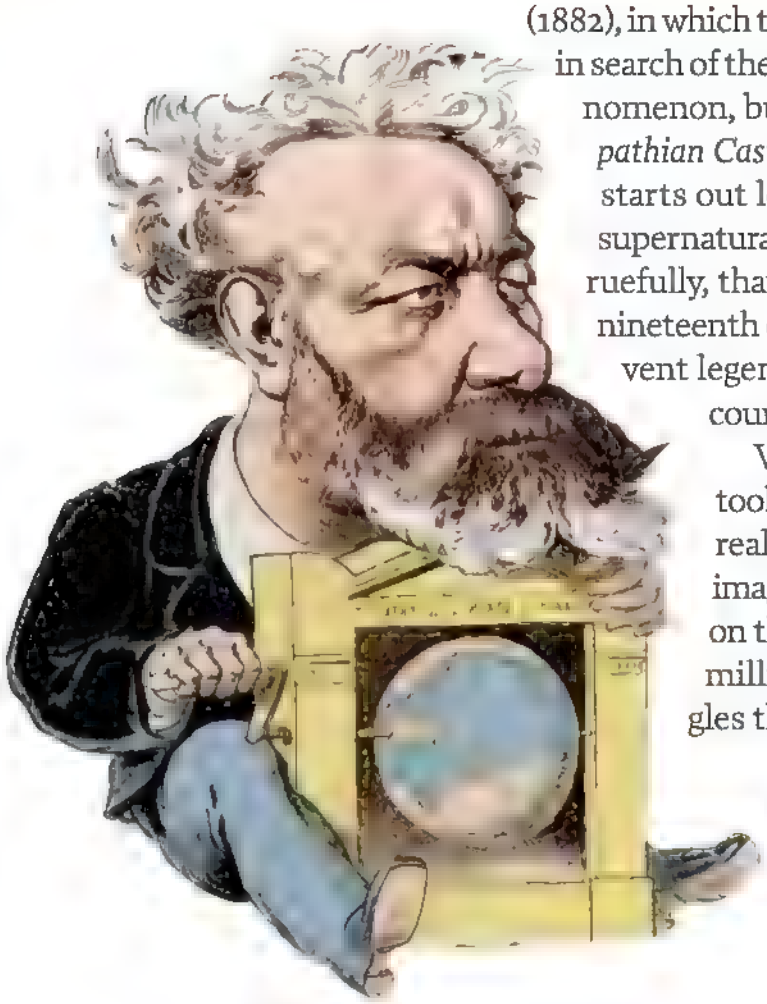
FOR THE LAST two decades of his life, Jules Verne lived and worked in the impressive Tower House in Amiens, which today serves as the city's Jules Verne Museum. Although his publisher Hetzel's contracts were never overly generous, they did allow Verne to live in some style at this stage in his life. True to the writer's fascination with all things technological, the glass and iron of the tower represented, at the time, the height of architectural sophistication. From this vantage point, Verne could brood on both the wonders and the dangers of his century's scientific progress. *Propeller Island* (1895), written during this late period, examined the destruction of native cultures in the South Pacific—passages which would later be cut from the English edition for fear of offending either American or British readers.

JULES VERNE'S TOWER HOUSE IN AMIENS, WHERE HE WROTE MANY OF HIS GREATEST NOVELS

ALAMY/ACI

(1882), in which the protagonists go to Scotland in search of the green flash atmospheric phenomenon, but find love instead. *The Carpathian Castle* (1892), set in Transylvania, starts out looking like a novel about the supernatural. In the prologue Verne notes, ruefully, that at the end of the "pragmatic nineteenth century" there is no one to invent legends, even in the most magical countries.

Verne's *Propeller Island* (1895) took his fiction belatedly into the realm of direct social critique. It imagined a vast floating island-city on the Pacific, entirely peopled by millionaires whose power struggles threaten to destroy their floating habitat. Around this stage in his life, Verne regretted that he had not made more overt reference to the political situation of his time. Tumultuous events such as the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, or the Paris Commune of the following year, make no impression at all on work that so prided itself on detail that he sometimes included the longitude and latitude measurements of his characters' locations.



VERNE IN A CARICATURE FROM THE MAGAZINE *L'ECLIPSE* (18/4), PUBLISHED TO COINCIDE WITH THE PREMIERE OF A STAGE VERSION OF *AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS*

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

As the 19th century, and Verne's life and career, drew to an end, there was little letup in his productivity. He served four terms as a conservative councillor in Amiens between 1888 and 1902 and contributed to the town's cultural scene. He messed about on boats, either on the Somme River or at Le Crotoy, a port on the Channel coast. The great writer of globe-trotting adventurers would finally die in Amiens in 1905, and is buried in the city where he spent much of his life.

Long Legacy

From a commercial perspective, and taking the long view, Hetzel's intuitions seem to have paid off. Verne's legacy has endured remarkably: UNESCO's index of most translated authors currently places him at number two, where he is bested only by Agatha Christie. He ranks above William Shakespeare, who is just below him at number three.

The list of authors he has influenced is long. Science fiction novelists such as H. G. Wells and Arthur C. Clarke owe Verne a direct debt of gratitude. In the 20th century, surrealist painters such as Max Ernst explicitly referenced him in their work.

Jules Verne's works seem tailored for films. The cinematic era dawned in the last years of Verne's own lifetime with Georges Méliès's 1902 *A Trip to the Moon*, based in part on Verne's 1865 novel, *From the Earth to the Moon*. Film versions of his books are still being made, inspired by his now fashionable steampunk aesthetic. An action movie with the impeccably Vernian title *The Aeronauts*, about Victorian-era explorers in a gas balloon, opened in 2019. Strangely, now that humans really have been to the moon, and taking 80 days to travel around the world is no longer anything to boast about, Verne's focus on how humanity uses its technological marvels seems to fascinate more than ever.

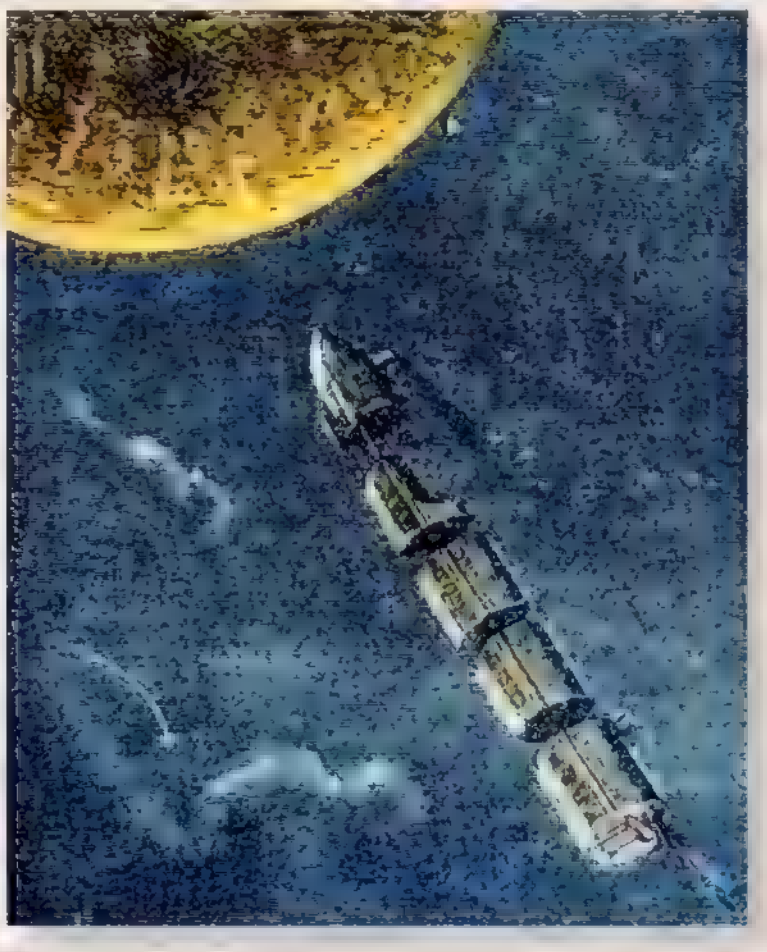
PEDRO GARCÍA MARTÍN IS PROFESSOR OF MODERN HISTORY AT THE AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF MADRID, SPAIN

NIGHTS AT THE CIRCUS
The Jules Verne Circus in Amiens was inaugurated by the city's famous writer in 1889, in his capacity as a municipal councillor.

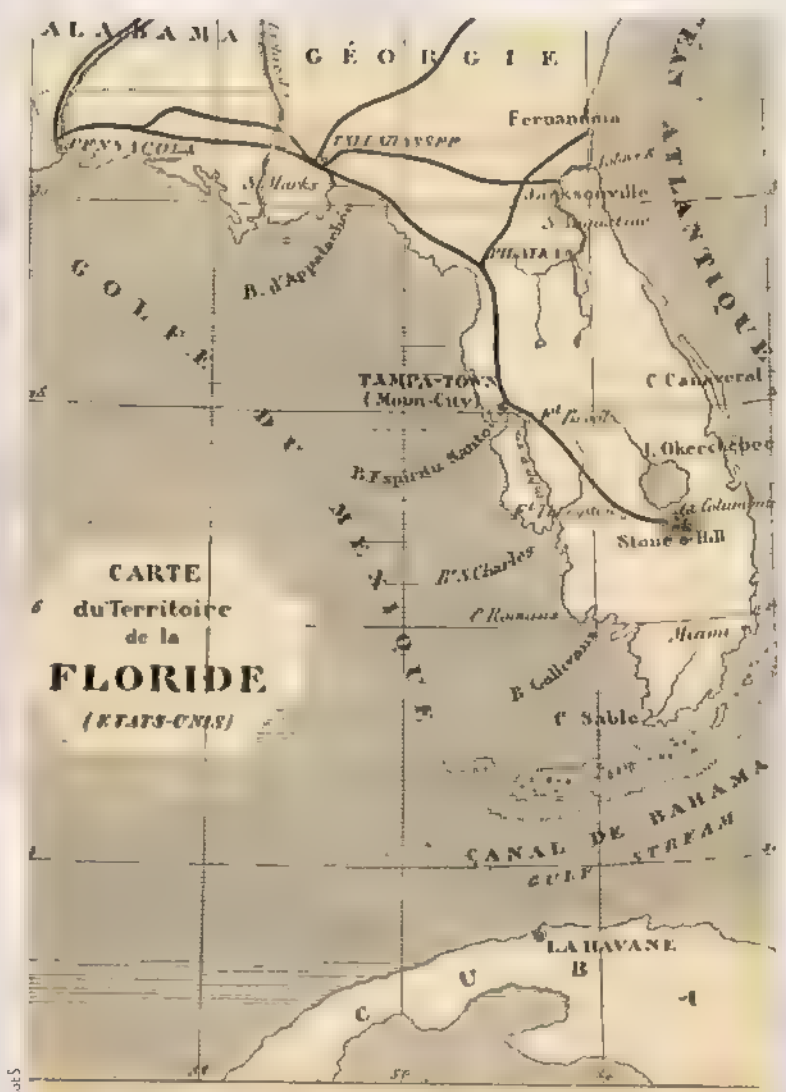
ALAMY/ACI

LUNAR LANDINGS

JULES VERNE'S NOVEL *FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON* (1865) and its sequel, *Around the Moon* (1870), describe the launch of a spaceship and its orbit around Earth's only satellite. There are curious similarities to the Apollo 8 mission, which nearly a century later, became the first crewed craft to orbit the moon in 1968. Both expeditions had a three-man crew; the rockets were of a similar size and weight; and both followed a similar trajectory before splashing down in the Pacific Ocean. Verne made detailed calculations of the time needed to reach the moon and the effect of orbit on the spacecraft. He worked out that the optimal starting point would be close to the 28th parallel as this would give the most direct trajectory, which informs his choice of Tampa as a launch scene, 125 miles from Cape Canaveral, where the NASA launch base for the Apollo missions would be built.



1 *All aboard the space train*
French rocket pioneer Michel Ardan estimates that the 80,400-league journey will take 97 hours: "Soon a service of trains will be established by projectiles, in which the lunar journey will be easily accomplished."



MAP SHOWING THE SPACECRAFT'S LAUNCH POINT IN VERNE'S *FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON*

GETTY IMAGES

4 *Gravity*
Verne describes the effect of zero gravity on the crew: "Through the counteraction of attractive forces, these men could tell no difference between light substances and heavy substances, and absolutely had no weight whatever themselves!"

ILLUSTRATIONS ARE FROM THE NOVELS *FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON* (1, 2, AND 3) AND *AROUND THE MOON* (4, 5, AND 6).
1. AND **2.** LEEMAGE/PR.SMA ARCHIVE, **3.** SPL/AGE FOTOSTOCK, **4.** A..AMY/ACI **5.** AKG/A..BUM; **6.** ALAMY/ACI

2 *Preparations*
Verne's crew carry thermometers, barometers, and telescopes, as well as weapons and "clothing adapted to every temperature, from that of polar regions to that of the torrid zone."

3 *Liftoff*
A large cannon was to launch the rocket at seven miles a second. But Verne's calculation does not take into account the resistance of the atmosphere, which in reality would have torn his spacecraft to pieces.

5 *Observation*
"Putting the glass to his eye, Barbicane examined the clefts for some time. He saw that their banks were sharp edged and steep . . . These peculiarities of the lunar surface had interested the astronomic mind to a very high degree at their first discovery."

6 *Landing*
Looking skyward, the crew of the frigate U.S.S. *Susquehanna* see "a ball of dazzling brightness, directly over their heads and evidently falling towards them." After the rocket splashes down in the Pacific, the frigate crew help the astronauts to safety.

The Abandoned Churches of Ani

Its glorious spell as the capital of medieval Armenia ended in centuries of conquest and massacres, but Ani still stands proud on one of the world's most tense political fault lines.

East of the Turkish city of Kars lies a complex of lonely medieval churches. Octagonal towers, crumbling walls, and fallen columns lay scattered across vast grasslands. In the gorge that drops away to the Akhuryan River—which forms Turkey's border with the modern state of Armenia—is an ancient bridge, broken in the middle.

These ruins are all that remain of Ani, the cosmopolitan capital of medieval Armenia, one of the earliest kingdoms to adopt Christianity as its state religion in the early A.D. 300s. The site of a fifth-century fortification, Ani was chosen to be Armenia's capital in the 10th century. It became home to as many as

100,000 people, and was so richly endowed with sacred buildings that it came to be known as the "city of 1,001 churches."

Its strategic position along trade routes between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea made it an attractive possession, condemning it to centuries of invasion—and eventually, a long period of abandonment.

Clash of Empires

Following its absorption into the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century, Ani remained a distant memory until the early 1800s, when European travelers began to visit the site of the medieval city. The ruins of Ani were located on a geopolitical fault line at the edges of the Ottoman, Persian, and Russian Empires. Visiting the remains of the city was risky as political tensions were running high.

Nevertheless, some visitors carried out hasty surveys and aroused interest among scholars. In 1817 Scottish diplomat and traveler Robert Ker Porter passed through and recorded his impressions. While remaining vigilant in a place whose "gloomy ruins" were perfect hiding places for "sanguinary freebooters," Ker Porter's account transmitted his excitement: "On entering the city, I found the whole surface of the ground covered with broken capitals, highly ornamented friezes; and other remains of ancient magnificence."

Some of the churches, he wrote, were more intact than others, but even they "are as solitary as all the others structures, on which

THE CHURCH of St. Gregory the Illuminator in Ani was built in 1215 alongside the Akhuryan River, the modern border between Turkey and Armenia.

FLORIAN NEUKIRCHEN/AGE FOTOSTOCK

ILLUMINATED GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN, CREATED BY SARG S, A 14TH-CENTURY ARMENIAN ILLUMINATOR. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK

ALBUM/METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

961
King Ashot I.I of Armenia makes Ani his capital. The town grows wealthy, and the king begins building sacred structures

1001
Under King Gagik I, Ani reaches the peak of its splendor. In the decades following his death, the city begins a slow decline.

1226
Ani falls to the Mongols after a devastating attack. Loss of trade and an earthquake in 1319 will lead to its abandonment

1579
Ani is absorbed into the Ottoman Empire. It is largely forgotten until it comes under Russian control in the late 1800s

time and devastation have left more heavy strokes."

In 1839 British Army captain Richard Wilbraham marveled at the solidity of Ani's defenses and the presence of Christian iconography. "The sacred symbol of Christianity is introduced in various places," he observed. "Huge blocks of blood-red stone, let into the masonry of the tower, form gigantic crosses, which have defied the hand of the destroying Moslem [*sic*]." Despite these glimmers of scholarly interest, time and weather continued to take their toll on Ani. Several more decades would pass before archaeologists arrived to carry out a formal survey.

New Capital, Old Nation

The medieval kingdom of Armenia once extended far beyond the modern boundaries of today's nation. In ancient times these lands came under the control of

ROYAL METROPOLIS

IN THE 10TH CENTURY the Bagratid dynasty laid the foundations of an extensive kingdom in eastern Anatolia. In 961 King Ashot III (below, in a modern statue from Gyumri) made Ani his capital. He improved the fifth-century fortifications on the site, creating a city to showcase the architectural glories of Christian Armenia.

VLADIMIR SMIRNOV/GETTY IMAGES

Ahead of Its Time

ANI'S CATHEDRAL was completed in A.D. 1001 by Trdat the Architect (who also reconstructed the damaged dome of the Hagia Sophia cathedral in Constantinople). Its ribbed vaulting would not be seen in European cathedrals until at least two centuries later. During Ani's sacking by the Seljuks in 1064, it was converted into a mosque; but returned to Christian usage in 1124. Its dome was destroyed in the earthquake of 1319.

JANE SWEENEY/AGE FOTOSTOCK

the Persians, then the Seleucids, the Parthians, and the Romans. But as these different empires rose and fell, Armenian identity prevailed.

Christianity became a central part of Armenian history when it was still a young faith. The religion took hold and Christian Armenia existed alongside the Byzantines, the Sassanians, and then the Arab-Muslims.

In the 10th century the Bagratid dynasty rose to power in northern Armenia. King Ashot III (952-977) chose Ani as his royal capital. Between 977 and 989 his successor, Smabat II, constructed its double, northern walls, crowned with round towers. Trade routes making up the Silk Road shifted to pass through the city. Flush with wealth, the rulers started to build more churches.

One of the first, the Church of St. Gregory of the Abughamrents, was built as a private chapel for the powerful Pahlavuni family. Like many of Ani's churches, its location was purposefully chosen so it could be seen far away from the city.

As Ani thrived under the early 11th-century king Gagik I, more churches were built from the local basalt stone, which varies in color from red to yellow to black. Ani's imposing cathedral, built by the great Armenian architect Trdat, and three other churches, rose high above the city walls of Ani in the first half of the 11th century. The dome of one of these, the Church of the Holy Redeemer, was supported on an entirely circular drum and housed a fragment of the True Cross.

In 1064 the Seljuks attacked. From then on, Ani was increasingly controlled by outsiders, including the Muslim Shaddadid dynasty, under whose rule Ani's late 11th-century mosque of Manuchihr was built. Christian rule resumed under the Georgian kingdom, during which more churches rose, including that of St. Gregory of Tigran Honents in 1215.

Later in the 13th century, Ani was sacked by the Mongols, and decline set in. Trade routes shifted away, and commodities and commerce went with them. In 1319 an earthquake badly damaged the city. After a period under Safavid Persian rule, the city was officially absorbed into the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century. Ani was later abandoned and became a ghost town.

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THE LIVES OF Jesus and St. Gregory the Illuminator are represented in frescoes inside Ani's 13th-century Church of St. Gregory of Tigran Honents.
IZZET KERIBAR/GETTY IMAGES

Hope and Despair

In 1878 the Russian Empire took over the region around Ani. The discoveries of explorers like Ker Porter and Wilbraham formed the basis for Russian interest in this site that had been so important for eastern Christianity. In the 1890s Russia backed a team led by Nikolay Yakovlevich Marr, a Georgian-born scholar, to excavate the ancient city.

The study, begun by Marr, continued until 1917, and succeeded in uncovering at least some of the city's majestic past, revealing that a complex of bridges and roads once spanned the plunging ravines over the river.

Armenia, however, continued to be torn apart by war as Russia (later, the Soviet Union) and Turkey fought over the lands surrounding the ruins of Ani. Begun in 1915, the massacre of the Armenian people by the Ottoman Empire—who believed the local population had sided with Russia—wiped out as many as 1.5 million lives. Many historians consider it the world's first genocide.

For the second half of the 20th century, Ani found itself straddling yet another geopolitical fault line: this time, on the frontier between NATO member Turkey and Soviet-controlled Armenia. The location of the site in Turkey is controversial to many Armenians. In 2016 the complex of buildings was placed on UNESCO's list of World Heritage sites.

The shattered ruins of the city, swarmed by armies through the ages, has always been a special place for Armenians. In the wake of the Armenian Genocide, it stands as an even more powerful reminder of Armenia's losses and of its astonishing endurance.

—Antonio Ratti

NIKOLAY MARR, A GEORGIAN-BORN ARCHAEOLOGIST, BEGAN EXCAVATING THE CITY OF ANI IN THE 1890S.
ALAMY/ACI

Marr's study revealed the scale of Ani's sophistication: magnificent churches, mighty walls, and a complex of bridges.

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TWO AMAZONS OVERWHELM A WARRIOR IN A DETAIL FROM AN ETRUSCAN SARCOPHAGUS. ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, FLORENCE
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FIGHTING, FIERCE, AND FEMALE

GREEK MYTHOLOGY features tales of feared warrior women, the Amazons who fought alongside Greeks at Troy and fought against the great Heracles. Daughters of the war god Ares, their skill with weapons and courage in battle struck fear in the hearts of their foes. Recent archaeology suggests that the Amazons might be more than just myth: Excavations have uncovered tombs of warrior women from the nomadic Scythian culture, whose home near the Black Sea is where the Amazons were said to have lived.

DARWIN'S VOYAGE ABOARD THE *BEAGLE*

IN 1831 the captain of the *Beagle* hired a 22-year-old naturalist named Charles Darwin to join his crew on a five-year voyage around the world. Leaving the cramped ship to collect specimens wherever he could, Darwin observed a fabulous variety of life. In South America he was able to travel huge distances inland on horseback. After returning to England, Darwin never ventured abroad again, but the experience shaped ideas about the natural world that later formed his theory of evolution.

CHARLES DARWIN CARRIED THIS POCKET SEXTANT (CENTER) ON HIS JOURNEY AROUND SOUTH AMERICA ABOARD THE *BEAGLE*.
BRIDGEMAN/ACI; SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY; MAP: CHARLES W. BERRY/NGS

Seti's Spectacular Tomb

In 1817 Italian Egyptologist Giovanni Belzoni stumbled on the rubble-filled entrance of a tomb in the Valley of the Kings. With mounting excitement, he identified it as that of Seti I, father of Ramses the Great, and adorned from floor to ceiling with vibrant murals painted 14 centuries before.

Life on the Roman Frontier

At 1,770 miles in length, the Danube River formed much of the Roman Empire's northern border. Life for the legions sent to build and man its watchtowers was calm when the empire's strength was at its height, but turned chaotic and violent when Rome entered a long, slow decline.

The Children's Crusade

A 12-year-old boy promised miracles to his followers in the 1200s; chroniclers dubbed his movement a "children's crusade." In reality, it was neither a crusade, nor was it backed only by children—it formed part of a wave of piety that swept medieval Europe, attracting people of all ages.